

**King leaves today for Oman, UAE**

AMMAN (AFP) — His Majesty King Abdullah leaves today for official visits to Oman and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) for talks with Gulf leaders. King Abdullah is due to meet with Sultan Qaboos during his 24-hour visit to Oman on Saturday before heading to the UAE, where he will meet on Sunday with Emirates President Sheikh Zayed Ben Sultan Al Nahyan.

Volume 24 Number 7115

AMMAN SATURDAY, APRIL 10, 1999, DHUL HIJJA 24, 1419

**King, Queen receive Queen Noor at airport**

AMMAN (Petra) — Their Majesties King Abdullah and Queen Rania last night received at the airport Her Majesty Queen Noor and Their Royal Highnesses Crown Prince Hamzah, Prince Mohammad Ben Talal and Princess Taghrid, who arrived from London. King Abdullah and Queen Rania were accompanied by Prime Minister Abdur-Rauf S. Rawabdeh, Royal Court Chief Abdul Karim Kabariti, HRH Prince Rashid and the British chargé d'affaires in Amman. Prince Hamzah will spend three weeks in the Kingdom before leaving for London to resume his studies at Sandhurst.

# Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation

جورдан تايمز يومية سياسية مستقلة نصدرها عن المؤسسة الصحفية العربية، الراي.

## Jordan's ties with Arab states to be based on mutual respect — King

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Abdullah has said in an newspaper interview that Jordan's relations with Israel will not be at the expense of the Kingdom's ties with Arab countries, particularly Syria, Iraq, Egypt and Palestine.

"I have no problem with any other Arab country, and in the new era we are opening a new stage with all Arab states based on mutual respect," the King said in an interview published Friday by the London-based Arabic daily *Al Quds Al Arabi*.

In reference to Jordan's relations with Egypt, the King said: "Coordination between both countries is at its highest levels."

With reference to Syria, King Abdullah expressed his admiration for Bashar Assad, son of President Hafez Assad.

The King said that when the young Assad visited Amman to offer condolences on King Hussein's passing, he spoke about his visions for the future of Syria.

Bashar Assad expressed his views about political changes and modernisation of his country to meet current developments throughout the world," King Abdullah said.

On relations with Arab Gulf

states, the King said: "We maintain good relations with these states and we understand their present financial circumstances, and that's why we did not ask for assistance or financial grants, but look forward to close economic cooperation that ensures the interests of both sides, like opening the door to Jordanian workers and opening the markets Jordanian industrial and agricultural products."

King Abdullah said there is no political or media activity by the Iraqi opposition groups in Jordan.

Jordanian papers tackle Iraqi issues in a manner that is more inclined towards neutrality, although some of the articles continue to express sympathy towards the Iraqi people, the King said.

Some of the papers demand the lifting of the sanctions and warn against alleged U.S. conspiracies to partition Iraq.

King Abdullah said:

"Jordan will not be drawn to any form of military or political intervention in Iraq. We are at the start of a new era and we give priority to our domestic affairs and to putting our home in order and strengthening national unity.

Therefore, we have no ambition to play a regional role in Iraq or in any other country.

We have clarified this point to the Gulf countries' officials. What concerns us in Jordan is seeing a united and stable Iraq and Iraqi people relieved of their suffering. Jordan will not serve as a springboard for any military or hostile actions against Iraq."

King Abdullah said there is no political or media activity by the Iraqi opposition groups in Jordan.

Jordanian papers tackle Iraqi issues in a manner that is more inclined towards neutrality, although some of the articles continue to express sympathy towards the Iraqi people, the King said.

Some of the papers demand the lifting of the sanctions and warn against alleged U.S. conspiracies to partition Iraq.

King Abdullah said:

"Jordan will not be drawn to any form of military or political intervention in Iraq. We are at the start of a new era and we give priority to our domestic affairs and to putting our home in order and strengthening national unity.

Therefore, we have no ambition to play a regional role in Iraq or in any other country.

(Continued on page 2)

## Bodybuilder stripped of title 'admits' taking banned substance

By Tareq Ayyoub

AMMAN — A Jordanian bodybuilder who was stripped of his title by the International Body Building Federation (IFBB) following a positive drug test has indirectly admitted using medicines containing substances that could be considered as performance-enhancing drugs.

Mustafa Hassanein, who won the over 90-kilogramme bodybuilding contest in Turkey last November, was reportedly disqualified from the championship and stripped of his medal.

An IFBB report, which was obtained last week by the Jordan Times, indicated that Hassanein was not among the medal winners at the 1998 IFBB Men's World Amateur BodyBuilding Championships in Izmir.

IFBB regulations stipulate that doping offences require a two-year suspension for a first time offence and a lifetime suspension for a second offence. National federations are also fined if they fail to ensure that their national team members are competing drug-free.

Updated results obtained from the IFBB made no mention of Hassanein as a gold medal winner, which went to

the Russian bodybuilder Sergei Chelestov, while second place was given to the Ukrainian national Oleg Protas.

The IFBB results noted that the final placements differ from those originally posted and reflect results of the doping control tests conducted on medalists after the finals.

Hassanein told Jordan Television on Friday that following an injury he sustained last year he was advised by his Austrian doctor to use cortisone and another medication which apparently included banned substances.

"I did not know that this substance could last in the body for 14 months..." Hassanein

"I have undergone many medical checks but the mistake [made] is to use the cortisone, which is not considered as a drug but in fact is prohibited by the International Olympic Committee," Hassanein added.

The IFBB report came as a shock to me. It has damaged not only my reputation but my country as well," said the Jordanian bodybuilder, who currently resides in Vienna.

During the TV show, Minister of Youth and Sports Mohammad Kheir Mansar said that a severe punishment would be handed down to Hassanein.

Updated results obtained from the IFBB made no mention of Hassanein as a gold medal winner, which went to

sanein if it were proven that the IFBB's report was true.

Mansar indicated that he has received a letter from IFBB President Ben Weider in this regard and his ministry is investigating the validity of the report.

"We shall support you until it is otherwise proven. But if the drug offence is proven, we will be very tough in our decision against you and our decision will be tougher than the IFBB decision," Mansar, who was addressing Hassanein through a telephone call in the JTV show, said.

The Arabic daily *Al Arab Al Yawm* on Thursday published what it described as the IFBB report, in which the federation mentioned that it had disqualified the Jordanian national from his title.

Hassanein loses his title because the Doping Control [Committee] has confirmed that Hassanein took steroids in big quantities... I hope that it will be a big lesson for all bodybuilders," the IFBB report quoted Weider as saying in the one page report.

The report, dated Feb. 2, indicated that a copy of it was circulated to all IFBB members, including Jordan.

(Continued on page 2)

NATO's supreme commander, U.S. General Wesley Clark, said Yeltsin's warning would not stop the bombing: "We're going to continue with the mission exactly as planned regardless of political and diplomatic atmospheres."

Although the Kremlin denied the missile reports, Yeltsin changed track dramatically from the hitherto unconditional line that Russia would not be sucked into the Kosovo conflict.

"I told NATO, the Americans, the Germans: Don't push us towards military action," he said in televised comments during a meeting with parliamentary speaker, Gennady

Selezniov. "Otherwise there will be a European war for sure and possibly world war."

Selezniov had also quoted the president, who is under pressure from a hostile parliament weighing his possible impeachment, as saying he supported Yugoslav leader Slobodan Milosevic's request to join the union of Russia and Belarus.

Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov was the first to break hours of strange silence on Selezniov's announcement that Yeltsin had ordered the retargeting of nuclear missiles at NATO.

He denied that any new orders had been given to target NATO countries but hit out at the military alliance. "If we assess the situation objectively, we clearly see that with every passing day the NATO operation is increasingly demonstrating its senselessness, both political and military," he said.

The U.S. State Department said Secretary of State Madeleine Albright would meet Ivanov in Oslo next week to discuss Kosovo.

Meanwhile, former Cyprus President Spyros Kyprianou failed in his bid to win the release of three captured U.S. soldiers.

After meeting with Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic, the Cypriot said Yugoslavia "cannot resort to any peaceful gestures" in light of the air strikes, which the allies have vowed to continue.

The White House, which has demanded the men's unconditional release, said it was not surprised. "We did not have great expectations" about Kyprianou's effort, deputy press secretary Barry Faro said.

A hit on Jugopetrol storage depot at Smederevo, 30 kilometres east of Belgrade, ignited an enormous fireball.

Dense black smoke engulfed nearby vineyards and fruit

orchards in spring bloom.

NATO jets struck twice late Thursday and early Friday at several targets in Kragujevac, an industrial town 90 kilometres south of Belgrade, targeting the Zastava industrial complex, the state-run Tanjug said.

It said 124 people were hurt. Workers at the plant, Serbia's biggest employer, had earlier organised a human shield to deter NATO bombing.

The Yugoslav army later issued a harsh statement accusing Albania of "aggression" and saying those supporting the KLA would "have to bear the consequences for the eventual fire-up of the war in the Balkans."

NATO leaders, meanwhile, pointed to what they said were air strike successes against Serb police and army units on the ground in Kosovo, which are blamed for many of the alleged atrocities against the province's ethnic Albanians.

Their lines of communication are being cut, their vehicles assembly areas are being attacked, their supplies are running low and they are taking casualties," Gen. Sir Charles Guthrie, the British chief of defence staff, said Friday. "They are on a slippery slope."

The latest wave of allied attacks late Thursday and Friday targeted Yugoslavia's military-industrial plants, fuel depots and communications facilities.

A hit on Jugopetrol storage depot at Smederevo, 30 kilometres east of Belgrade, ignited an enormous fireball.

Dense black smoke engulfed nearby vineyards and fruit

(Continued on page 2)

bers and keenness to show support for the King and his government explains the high number of votes Rawabdeh received," the deputy told the Jordan Times.

The Muslim Brotherhood's political arm, the Islamic Action Front, boycotted the 1997 parliamentary elections over the enactment of a controversial Election Law.

In his rebuttal on Thursday, the premier described his government statement as a "strategy that cannot be implemented in days, months or years."

"Our policy statement is a letter of

intent... requiring an outline of priorities, which we will do," the premier told lawmakers. He was interrupted several times by applause from citizens attending the three-hour session.

Rawabdeh, who accompanied King Abdullah on a trip to Saudi Arabia last week, stressed that his government intends to strengthen its ties with all Arab states "with no exception," adding that Jordan will never resort to the "axis policy" of one Arab state against another.

Analysts believe that the government's foreign policy will focus on Arab relations, especially ahead of

the May 17 Israeli elections. Jordan is keen not to appear to be supporting any particular party in the Israeli polls.

The premier was echoing King Abdullah's instructions in his letter of designation to Rawabdeh to focus on maintaining strong ties with Arab states, especially those neighbouring the Kingdom.

The King is scheduled to begin a visit to Oman and the United Arab Emirates on Saturday. He is expected to hold talks with Syrian President Hafez Assad later this month.

During the session, Rawabdeh cast

doubt on his government's ability to reach the three per cent economic growth rate envisioned in the 1999 budget, which was submitted by the former government headed by Fayed Yarwneh.

To be frank with you, this is an estimate figure. I expect this year's growth rate will be less than the figure [forecast] due to the decline of some [economic] sectors especially agriculture, as well as the political and economic situation in the region," Rawabdeh said.

(Continued on page 2)



A woman inspects damage to a family house in Aleksinac, 160 km south of Belgrade, on Friday. The NATO aerial campaign against Yugoslavia has entered its third week (AP photo)

## Yeltsin warns of war over Kosovo; new NATO strikes on Good Friday

124 injured at hit factory; envoy's bid to free U.S. soldiers fails

**Top Palestinian official advises Arafat not to delay statehood**

RAMALLAH (AFP) — A top Palestinian official warned Yasser Arafat Friday against any delay in declaring a Palestinian state as Israeli officials cautioned that talks on the final status of the territories could last as long as three years.

Giving in to international pressure not to declare an independent state when interim peace accords expire on May 4 would damage Palestinian national interests, said Assembly speaker Ahmad Qureia, one of the principal architects of the Israeli-Palestinian peace agreements.

"A delay would have a grave impact on Palestinian interests," he argued in full-page articles in the Palestinian dailies *Al Ayyam* and *Al Hayat Al Jadida*.

The Palestinian leadership would lose credibility both domestically and internationally," he said.

Qureia is the first Palestinian official to speak out publicly against the mounting international pressure on Arafat to defer declaration of a Palestinian state until after Israeli elections on May 17 and June 1 to prevent it becoming a campaign issue.

Arafat is currently on the last, Far Eastern, leg of an international tour aimed at gauging the opinion of world governments on Palestinian statehood, and last week the Palestinians gave the first hint that they might bow to pressure to delay the declaration.

The various Palestinian parties will meet before the end of April to decide whether to declare a Palestinian state [on May 4] or postpone the declaration for a limited time," Palestinian International Cooperation Minister Nabil Shaath told reporters in Cairo.

But the Palestinian speaker said that world leaders were mistaken if they believed that a declaration of statehood would play into the hands of the hawkish government of right-wing Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

"On the contrary, a delay would give his campaign a major fillip by allowing him to present himself as a strong prime minister who protects Israeli interests and forces concessions from the Palestinians," Qureia said.

Prolonging the interim five-year period of Palestinian autonomy agreed at Oslo, "would give Israel longer to continue its policy of expanding Jewish settlements [in the occupied territories], Judaizing Jerusalem and prevaricating over the release of Palestinian prisoners," he said.

## Rawabdeh government wins strongest vote of confidence in history

## Prime minister pledges to improve economy, strengthen Arab ties

By Tareq Ayyoub

AMMAN — Prime Minister Abdur-Rauf S. Rawabdeh, armed with the strongest parliamentary vote of confidence in Jordan's history, has promised to do his utmost to bring the country out of an economic recession, forge ahead with the peace treaty with Israel and improve ties with Arab states.

Rawabdeh, speaking on Thursday at the end of a three-day debate before his government won 66 votes in the 80-member House, said the government was ready to review

controversial press and public freedom laws — a main demand of opposition parties and human rights groups at home and abroad.

After the parliamentary session, His Majesty King Abdullah visited the Prime Ministry and congratulated Rawabdeh.

In his policy statement submitted last Saturday, Rawabdeh indicated that the government will contact its debtors to reschedule, scrap or transfer some of its foreign debt into grants.

During Thursday's session, only 12 lawmakers withheld confidence in

Rawabdeh's 23-member Cabinet, the first named since King Abdullah assumed the Throne, while two other deputies abstained.

Five centrist deputies including pro-government lawmaker Abdul Karim Dughmi, five leftist and two Islamist MPs withheld their confidence in Rawabdeh's team.

Rawabdeh received such a ringing endorsement because his programme was convincing and he is respected by deputies for his intelligence and competence," one deputy, who asked not to be named, said.

"The absence of opposition mem-

bers and keenness to show support for the King and his government explains the high number of votes Rawabdeh received," the deputy told the Jordan Times.

The Muslim Brotherhood's political arm, the Islamic Action Front, boycotted the 1997 parliamentary elections over the enactment of a controversial Election Law.

In his rebuttal on Thursday, the premier described his government statement as a "strategy that cannot be implemented in days, months or years."

## JPA criticises Al Arab Al Yawm's move to sack 17 of its employees

By Alia Shukri Hamzeh

AMMAN — The Jordan Press Association (JPA) slammed Al Arab Al Yawm's board of directors for sacking more than a dozen of the daily's employees last week saying it will counter such measures legally to defend their rights and livelihood.

In a letter to the daily's chairman of the board, Riyadh Hroub, the JPA expressed deep concern about and disapproval of the recent firing of the paper's employees saying such actions had been taken before and that Hroub had then personally vowed not repeat them.

"We hope that this is only a bad rumour, if not the JPA council will counter such unjustifiable measures legally in the defence of their colleagues' rights and livelihood," said the letter on Thursday.

But on Friday evening after a two-hour emergency meeting of the JPA council, it was confirmed that around 17 Al Arab Al Yawm employees had indeed been dismissed.

According to JPA's Deputy President Tareq Momani, the employees

were served notice of their dismissal on Thursday. He said eight of them are journalists.

Momani told the Jordan Times that several of those who were sacked approached the association for help.

The council requested Al Arab Al Yawm's General Manager Adnan Husseini attend the Friday meeting, during which he confirmed the dismissal of the employees saying it fell within an article in the Labour Law concerning "labour organisation."

Husseini told us that the paper was going through a restructuring phase and had demanded the heads of departments recommend the most needed in order to sack the surplus," Momani added.

He said Husseini told them that the 17 were the only group of employees to be sacked from the paper. However, an editor at the daily who requested anonymity, said this was only the first group to present and that there were more to come.

At the end of the meeting, Momani said the council remained unconvinced by Husseini's arguments and

demanded to meet Hroub to reconsider the dismissals.

He said the council will remain on call to pursue the case and will take further measures, including legal action, and sit-ins if Hroub does not respond.

"This is not an individual case, it includes everybody, and we have to teach all media institutions not to resort to such measures against its employees," Momani added.

Journalist and JPA-member Jamal Alawi, who is running for the JPA presidency later this month, said he and many fellow journalists have set up a seven-member defence committee that includes Lower House Deputies Salameh Hiyyari, Mahmoud Kharabshah, Salameh Attiyeh and other journalists to pursue the case on behalf of Al Arab Al Yawm's employees.

"This sort of a problem worries most journalists and newspaper employees, and we want to make sure it does not happen again," said Alawi.

He told the Jordan Times that the committee will hold a meeting Saturday, and that a sit-in front of the Parliament building by many journalists was arranged for

Sunday.

"Al Arab Al Yawm has set a precedent in sacking its employees and the JPA council has not taken any tough or adequate measures against that, therefore it is my right as well as that of my fellow journalists to fight it," he added.

According to Momani the daily last December sacked around 16 of its non-journalist employees.

Last February, Hroub also fired the daily's chief editor Saleh Qallab and Taher Adwan, the paper's responsible editor.

Reasons behind the editors' dismissals remain a puzzle to many as well as to the editors themselves, yet speculations centred around personal differences between Qallab and Hroub.

When asked for reasons behind the editors' dismissals, Hroub said it was part of the paper's "internal restructuring process."

Hroub who owns shares in Al Arab Al Yawm, Al Masaiyah, The Arab Daily, and in weeklies Shihan, Al Bilad and Abed Rabbah has been unavailable for comment.

## Yeltsin warns of war over Kosovo; new NATO strikes on Good Friday

(Continued from page 1)

Tanjung also reported a total of three daytime detonations southeast and southwest of Pristina, the Kosovo capital. For the first time, no air strikes were reported in Pristina itself overnight.

In a statement, NATO acknowledged that earlier this week, one of its bombs from an attack on the main telephone exchange in Pristina fell short of its target, causing damage to a residential area.

"Despite our very best efforts it appears that on this attack one bomb may have caused some collateral damage," Air Commodore David Wilby told reporters during a briefing at NATO headquarters in Brussels. In Thursday's briefing, Wilby said allied bombing was not responsible for the widespread damage in Pristina, saying this damage was caused by the Serbs.

NATO allies have insisted the bombing campaign will continue until Milosevic withdraws Serb special police and Yugoslav army units sent to Kosovo as part of the crackdown.

The allies also say he must also allow all ethnic Albanian refugees to return home and accept a peace plan calling for 28,000 NATO-led troops, including 4,000 Americans, to enforce a peace plan.

NATO's top general, Gen. Klaus Naumann, said Friday it would be "very, very difficult" for the West to impose peace in Kosovo without sending in ground troops.

UN Secretary General Kofi Annan called on Yugoslavia to stop all action by military and paramilitary forces and withdraw them from Kosovo. Canadian Immigration Minister Lucienne Robillard said UNHCR head Sadako Ogata had decided the UNHCR would not need Western nations to take in Kosovo refugees in an airlift at this time, but this could not immediately be confirmed.

Those reaching refuge in neighbouring states have described a systematic campaign of terror by Serb troops and police against ethnic Albanians, who made up 90 per cent of the Serbian province's pre-war population of two million people.

The rebels, however, call that a sham. Yugoslavia is also urging refugees to return — and chokes off nearly all border escape routes — but Western officials have voiced fears Milosevic wants to use them as human shields against NATO air strikes.

Nearly a half million ethnic Albanians have fled or were driven out of Kosovo since the NATO bombing campaign began March 24. In Europe's greatest mass displacement in half a century.

The U.N. refugee agency UNHCR appeared to have solved the mystery of the 10,000 Kosovo Albanian refugees who went missing on Wednesday, saying they had been located in Macedonia and neighbouring Albania.

ANKARA (AFP) -- The rebel Kurdish Labour Party (PKK) on Friday claimed responsibility for a suicide attack on a provincial governor in Turkey carried out by an Iranian.

In a statement carried by the pro-Kurdish news agency DEM, the PKK said the bomber was a member of its armed wing, the ARK.

DEM confirmed earlier information from the Turkish army identifying the attacker as a native of Urumieh in northwestern Iran.

The 21st Gendarmerie Division based in Yulkeskova, where the attack took place, said the man was named Turab Mouhammed.

Two other Iranians and two Turks involved in the attack were arrested, the statement added. It was the first known involvement of foreigners in the attacks that have hit Turkey since the capture of PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan in February.

The governor of Hakkari province, Nihat Canbolat, escaped Thursday's attempt on his life with minor injuries, but his driver was killed and nine people, five of them civilians, were injured.

The bomber was ripped to shreds by the explosives tied to his body.

It was the third suicide bombing committed by the PKK in Turkey in less than two weeks. Two people including the attacker were killed and 20 injured in an attack on the governor of Bingul province earlier this week. Eleven were injured in a similar attack in Istanbul in late March, in which the bomber died.

Ankara has frequently accused Iran of "closing its eyes" to the infiltration of PKK fighters into Turkey from its territory, a charge Tehran denies.

PKK leader Ocalan in December said the PKK had opened camps in northern Iran after its bases in Syria and Lebanon were closed. Turkey temporarily closed one of its three border gates with Iran on Feb. 22 and evacuated its consulate in Urumieh after a violent Kurdish demonstration there against the capture of Ocalan in which three people were killed.

**JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR**

10:45 Cairo (RJ)  
11:00 Geneva, Paris (add) (RJ)  
11:30 Amsterdam, New York (RJ)  
12:30 Rome (RJ)  
13:05 Brussels (RJ)  
13:45 Madrid (RJ)  
20:05 Riyadh, Dhahran (RJ)  
20:40 Bombay (RJ)  
21:00 Larnaca (RJ)  
21:30 Abu Dhabi, Dubai (RJ)  
01:00 Jeddah (add) (RJ)  
02:00 Jeddah (two flights (add) (RJ)  
03:00 Jeddah (RJ)  
04:00 Jeddah (add) (RJ)

Other Flights  
11:15 Sanaa (TJY)  
12:30 Riyadh (SV)  
13:10 Abu Dhabi, Doha (GF)  
13:10 Milan (AZ)  
14:00 Vienna (OS)  
14:40 Istanbul (TK)  
15:35 Beirut (ME)  
18:00 Dubai, Muscat (EK)  
18:00 Frankfurt (LH)  
18:10 Paris (AF)  
21:35 Cairo (MS)  
00:20 Amsterdam, Beirut (KL)  
00:55 London, Damascus (BA)  
02:00 Belgrade (JU)

Other Flights  
12:15 Aden, Sanaa (TJY)  
14:00 Riyadh (SV)  
14:00 Abu Dhabi, Bahrain (GF)  
14:00 Milan (AZ)  
14:50 Vienna (OS)  
16:00 Istanbul (TK)  
18:35 Beirut (ME)  
19:00 Dubai (EK)  
22:35 Cairo (MS)  
01:20 Amsterdam (KL)  
03:00 Damascus, Belgrade (JU)  
05:55 Damascus, London (BA)  
06:10 Frankfurt (LH)  
06:25 Paris (AF)

Royal Wings (RW)

08:30 Aqaba (arriving at QAIA) (RW)  
06:00 Tehran (RJ)  
07:45 Damascus (RJ)  
08:30 Agaba (add) (RJ)  
09:25 Beirut (RJ)  
09:30 New Delhi (RJ)  
09:30 Karachi, Dubai (RJ)  
10:00 Doha, Bahrain (RJ)  
10:05 Colombo (RJ)  
14:30 Cairo (RJ)  
15:00 New York, Amsterdam (RJ)  
18:10 London, Berlin (RJ)  
19:10 Limoges (France) (add) (RJ)  
21:15 Frankfurt (RJ)

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights  
05:35 Beirut (RJ)  
06:00 Agaba (add) (RJ)  
06:45 Agaba, Limoges (France) (add) (RJ)  
09:35 Agaba, Frankfurt (RJ)  
10:00 Agaba, Frankfurt (add) (RJ)  
19:45 Agaba (from Marks Airport) (RW)

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights  
05:35 Beirut (RJ)  
06:00 Agaba (from QAIA) (RW)  
08:30 Agaba (arriving at QAIA) (RW)  
18:00 Agaba (arriving at Marks Airport) (RW)

DEPARTURES

Royal Wings (RW)

06:00 Agaba (from QAIA) (RW)

08:30 Agaba (from Marks Airport) (RW)

19:45 Agaba (from Marks Airport) (RW)

PKK claims bombing, Iranian carried out attack

## Jordan's ties with Arab states to be based on mutual respect — King

(Continued from page 1)

that these countries will "write off a large portion of Jordan's debts because such a decision will help the Kingdom overcome its present economic crisis."

The King said the coming six months are extremely critical and priority is being given to the economy and how to create jobs and meet the Jordanian people's needs.

In reply to whether the late King Hussein had instructed him to take certain political steps, King Abdullah said: "I

was not fortunate enough to be at my father's side for a very long period of time before his death. But I spent time close to him for more than 20 years and from him I have learned a great deal. He was a father and a teacher to me. But in his last moments, he told me, 'My son you have a big heart, so follow your heart because it will never let you down'."

Present at the interview was Royal Court Chief Abdul Karim Kabariti.

The King expressed hope

that these countries will "write off a large portion of Jordan's debts because such a decision will help the Kingdom overcome its present economic crisis."

The King said the coming six months are extremely critical and priority is being given to the economy and how to create jobs and meet the Jordanian people's needs.

In reply to whether the late King Hussein had instructed him to take certain political steps, King Abdullah said: "I

was not fortunate enough to be at my father's side for a very long period of time before his death. But I spent time close to him for more than 20 years and from him I have learned a great deal. He was a father and a teacher to me. But in his last moments, he told me, 'My son you have a big heart, so follow your heart because it will never let you down'."

Present at the interview was Royal Court Chief Abdul Karim Kabariti.

The King expressed hope

that these countries will "write off a large portion of Jordan's debts because such a decision will help the Kingdom overcome its present economic crisis."

The King said the coming six months are extremely critical and priority is being given to the economy and how to create jobs and meet the Jordanian people's needs.

In reply to whether the late King Hussein had instructed him to take certain political steps, King Abdullah said: "I

was not fortunate enough to be at my father's side for a very long period of time before his death. But I spent time close to him for more than 20 years and from him I have learned a great deal. He was a father and a teacher to me. But in his last moments, he told me, 'My son you have a big heart, so follow your heart because it will never let you down'."

Present at the interview was Royal Court Chief Abdul Karim Kabariti.

The King expressed hope

that these countries will "write off a large portion of Jordan's debts because such a decision will help the Kingdom overcome its present economic crisis."

The King said the coming six months are extremely critical and priority is being given to the economy and how to create jobs and meet the Jordanian people's needs.

In reply to whether the late King Hussein had instructed him to take certain political steps, King Abdullah said: "I

was not fortunate enough to be at my father's side for a very long period of time before his death. But I spent time close to him for more than 20 years and from him I have learned a great deal. He was a father and a teacher to me. But in his last moments, he told me, 'My son you have a big heart, so follow your heart because it will never let you down'."

Present at the interview was Royal Court Chief Abdul Karim Kabariti.

The King expressed hope

that these countries will "write off a large portion of Jordan's debts because such a decision will help the Kingdom overcome its present economic crisis."

The King said the coming six months are extremely critical and priority is being given to the economy and how to create jobs and meet the Jordanian people's needs.

In reply to whether the late King Hussein had instructed him to take certain political steps, King Abdullah said: "I

was not fortunate enough to be at my father's side for a very long period of time before his death. But I spent time close to him for more than 20 years and from him I have learned a great deal. He was a father and a teacher to me. But in his last moments, he told me, 'My son you have a big heart, so follow your heart because it will never let you down'."

Present at the interview was Royal Court Chief Abdul Karim Kabariti.

The King expressed hope

that these countries will "write off a large portion of Jordan's debts because such a decision will help the Kingdom overcome its present economic crisis."

The King said the coming six months are extremely critical and priority is being given to the economy and how to create jobs and meet the Jordanian people's needs.

In reply to whether the late King Hussein had instructed him to take certain political steps, King Abdullah said: "I

was not fortunate enough to be at my father's side for a very long period of time before his death. But I spent time close to him for more than 20 years and from him I have learned a great deal. He was a father and a teacher to me. But in his last moments, he told me, 'My son you have a big heart, so follow your heart because it will never let you down'."

Present at the interview was Royal Court Chief Abdul Karim Kabariti.

The King expressed hope

that these countries will "write off a large portion of Jordan's debts because such a decision will help the Kingdom overcome its present economic crisis."

The King said the coming six months are extremely critical and priority is being given to the economy and how to create jobs and meet the Jordanian people's needs.

In reply to whether the late King Hussein had instructed him to take certain political steps, King Abdullah said: "I

was not fortunate enough to be at my father's side for a very long period of time before his death. But I spent time close to him for more than 20 years and from him I have learned a great deal. He was a father and a teacher to me. But in his last moments, he told me, 'My son you have a big heart, so follow your heart because it will never let you down'."

Present at the interview was Royal Court Chief Abdul Karim Kabariti.

The King expressed hope

# Home News

Jordan Times, Saturday, April 10, 1999 3

PKK  
claims  
bombing  
Iranian  
carried  
attack

## GAM halts decision to fell trees for Kashef road expansion

By Dana Charkasi

AMMAN — The Greater Amman Municipality (GAM) said on Friday it had suspended a plan to uproot 56 old pine trees to be able to widen a street in a picturesque and hilly area near Amman after a controversy raised by several residents.

The decision crowned a year-old anti-afforestation campaign by several residents of the Kashef area of Badr Al Jadid, near Maheb — 15 kilometres west of Amman — who offered an alternative to the municipality's plan.

"We have halted the process and we will conduct a new study on the matter in order to re-investigate whether the widening of the street is really necessary," Hussein Al Hamouri, director of the Public Relations department at the GAM, told the Jordan Times.

Residents said earlier

this week that 56 pines had been marked with colour to prepare for their removal to pave the way for plans to widen the street.

"It is a pity to cut down these beautiful old pine trees... they are irreplaceable," said resident Fayed Jaber, who together with others in the neighbourhood, have been trying to avert the GAM plan. "Here in Jordan, we need every single tree."

The trees at stake fall inside the boundaries of a land owned by Jaber. "As the land right and left of the street belongs to me, I offered to be flexible and spare the trees by detouring or diverting the street a bit to the left or right," Jaber added.

He said at least 40 of the trees could be spared by a minor diversion and through building an island around the trees — a common practice elsewhere in the capital. Some Kashef residents

said much of the land in the area belongs to a prominent local tribe, whose members favour widening the street to push up real estate prices.

However, the issue highlighted lack of serious popular awareness on nature conservation, including afforestation.

Salem Al Akur, director of the Forestry and Agricultural Resources at the Ministry of Agriculture, told the Jordan Times this week that he was unaware of the Kashef pine tree issue.

"However, our problem is that the Ministry of Agriculture does not participate in the committees that take decisions to open or to widen streets. These decisions are taken by the Greater Amman Municipality. We wish this system could be changed so that we have the opportunity to participate in this decision-making process."

## Theatre festival opens with novel performances

By Dima Hamdan

AMMAN — The 6th Amman International Festival was off to a good start on Thursday, with an impressive number of foreign and local theatre-goers left standing room only at the Royal Cultural Centre.

"We had a great turnout yesterday," Nader Amran, president of Al Fawanees group told the Jordan Times on Friday. He said that a least 700 people attended the first day's performances: an original musical concert and a contemporary choreography.

The festival started with a concert entitled "Oness," composed and performed by the Rum Troupe and the Swedish Backa Theatre Musicians. The theme, as described by a member of Rum, is about the unity of people of different cultures and races, and the harmony within the individual.

Both groups performed a remarkable and appealing combination of authentic Arabic and European tunes, as well as contemporary jazz.

Amran said that the feedback was "very positive."

The audience was pleased that Rum [which

is a relatively young group] was working with a foreign professional group," he said.

The Backa Theatre have been working for 15 years in rock, jazz, and pop.

Unfortunately, the venue did not have an adequate seating capacity, which caused discomfort to the unexpectedly large crowd.

The Rum Troupe was created by Jordanian composer Tarek Nasser in 1998. Nasser works closely with Arabic directors, including Syrian Najdat Attzour, and "composes scores for famous Arabic television dramas."

Switzerland's Alias Dance Group first performed in the festival with a dance entitled "We Can't Hold Our Breath Any Longer."

"We have made it a tradition to present at least two or three choreographies each festival," Amran said.

The show was based on the theme of human relations. Four dancers put on an interesting and provocative performance, but their intimate movements seem to have shocked some of the audience who are not accustomed to intimate acting on stage. On the other hand, vibrant music and clever scenography kept

the show intriguing and energetic throughout.

Although the display of sensuality was unusually daring, Amran said the festival is not censored and that he was prepared for the possibility of receiving negative feedback.

"But people in general enjoyed the show," he said, "Only four people left the theatre."

The Swedish Backa Theatre performed "My Dream Dad" on Friday at the Osama Al Mashini Theatre. It is a short choreography between a little girl who wants to play with her father who is too busy reading his newspaper. The play was directed by Eva Bergman, daughter of the renowned director Ingmar Bergman.

"My Dream Dad" will be performed again on Saturday.

Theatre Organique and Al Hamra, both Tunisian, will also begin their joint performance on Saturday with "Love in Autumn," a play about a female surgeon accused of harming a young patient.

The theatre festival is organised by Al Fawanees in cooperation with Al Warsha Theatre of Egypt.

## Jordanian men sweep Dead Sea ultra marathon

By Susan Resheq

AMMAN — Over 250 runners participated in the 7th Annual Amman-Dead Sea Ultra Marathon on Friday to raise funds for patients suffering from neurological diseases.

The 50-kilometre charity marathon was organised by the Amman Road Runners for the benefit of the Society for the Care of Neurological Patients and was held under the patronage of HRH Prince Firas Ben Ra'ad — His Majesty King Abdullah's adviser for health affairs — who is the president of the society which has so far spent more than JD61,480 on neurological patients.

"As the marathon participants increased it was thought that this would be an excellent opportunity to raise money for the charity and encourage more national and international runners to take part," said Minister of Tourism and Antiquities Akel Biltaji, who attended the marathon.

"We should think first of mental health; it is the most important thing," Biltaji said.

Runners kicked off the jaunt from the Seventh Circle

in Amman at 6:30 a.m. on their way to the Dead Sea, the lowest point on earth.

As runners descended towards their final destination temperatures rose, soaring from 14°C in Amman at 900 metres above sea level, to an average of 33°C at 400 metres below sea level.

"It was very cold in the morning in Amman but we warmed up as we ran. There was also an increase in temperature as we headed to the Dead Sea," said Masoud Daoudi, one of the marathon participants. "I have really enjoyed the run."

Runners were supplied with water every four kilometres. The ultra marathon included 120 Jordanian participants, 45 Americans, 35 Britons and 35 other runners from various countries.

An American participant told the Jordan Times, "it is such an excellent idea to hold such a charity marathon. This will encourage runners from many countries to participate as they will have the chance to run to the lowest point on earth and help needy people."

"Many people have come here to participate. They even brought children with them who wanted to run. This has

encouraged us to hold this marathon every year, and the number of participants has increased yearly. So, we hope the number of participants will reach 2,000 in the coming years," said Reem Farkouh, the Amman Road Runners representative.

"All revenues of the ultra marathon will be given to the Society for the Care of Neurological Patients in order to reach needed people," said Rafiq Hamamreh from the society and one of the organisers.

Prince Firas and Biltaji have awarded the winners' prizes, most of which went to Jordanians.

Several Jordan-based leading enterprises, including LG Electronics, Fastlink, and the Dead Sea Movenpick Hotel sponsored the charity event.

Jordanian Salameh Abdul Karim won the men's 50k, while Valerie LeCran from Brunei won the women's. In the 42k run, Jordanian Khaled Sheikh won the men's run, and Jansen Nayef, a British national, won the women's.

## Court sentences man to death for murder of JVA official

By Rana Husseini

AMMAN — The Criminal Court last week sentenced a 41-year-old man to death after he was found guilty of murdering his boss in Deir Alla in November 1998.

The court tribunal found Mohammad Abed, an employee of the Jordan Valley Authority, guilty of murdering Mohammad Habashneh, 48, the assistant to the secretary general of the JVA in his office on Nov. 7.

The same tribunal acquitted a second defendant, Hussein Khatib, of a charge of complicity in premeditated murder, "because of a lack of evidence."

Both defendants pleaded not guilty to the charges in their opening trial in January.

According to court documents, Abed was dismissed from his job upon Habashneh's recommendations, because "the defendant was

not disciplined in his job and used to initiate problems with his fellow employees."

"Because of his poor performance and his repeated violations, the victim transferred him to different departments, and finally recommended that he be dismissed from his job," the charge sheet said.

Abed decided to take revenge, and planned to kill Habashneh, it added.

On the morning of the incident, the charge sheet said, Abed asked his nephew to drive him to the Jordan Valley. "The defendant entered Habashneh's office, and without saying a word, shot him four times, and left with Mahmoud who was waiting for him in the car," the charge sheet said.

The verdict, handed down by Judges Mohammad Ajarme, Mifreh Mubeidin, and Issa Hamdan, will automatically be reviewed by the Court of Cassation within 30 days.

## Deputies head for IPU meeting

AMMAN (Prensa)

A Jordanian parliamentary delegation led by the Speaker of the Lower House of Parliament Abdul Hadi Majali left Friday for Brussels to take part in the International Parliamentary Union (IPU) meeting due to open Saturday with the participation of nearly 136 nations.

In a statement before his departure, Majali said the meeting will focus attention on social and political issues plaguing the world as well human rights and democracy issue.

Majali said he will focus attention in particular on the political and economic developments in the Middle East and the world at large from a Jordanian perspective and will

review stand on the Middle East peace process and the Kingdom's continued efforts to contribute to just and durable peace.

The address will urge the IPU to promote its role in enabling the U.N. to ensure the implementation of resolutions concerning democracy, public freedoms and world peace, according to Majali.

Majali said he will hold side meetings with heads of Arab and foreign parliamentary delegations to explore further cooperation in Middle East peace building. He also said the Jordanian delegation will participate in separate meetings with the Arab parliamentary delegations to coordinate the Arab countries stands.

## "We have no political differences with Syria" — Batikhi

AMMAN (J.T.)

The head of the General Intelligence Department, in an unprecedented newspaper interview, said Jordan has no political differences with Syria and is looking forward to strengthening bilateral ties with its northern neighbour.

"We do not consider ourselves as having a political difference with Syria," Samih Batikhi was quoted as saying in an interview with the Saudi Arabian daily *Ukaz* on Wednesday and reprinted by the local daily *Al Aswad* on Thursday.

"But as a matter of fact, Syria at a certain stage in time considered that there was a political difference (with Jordan) over the ... peace treaty with Israel," he added in his first interview with a newspaper since he took office in 1994.

"At the same time, Syria had distinguished ties with Egypt after the signing of Camp David peace treaty with Israel (in 1979) and we used to ask as to the cause for the estrangement (in Jordan-Syrian) ties."

Officials said recent Jordanian-Syrian gestures of goodwill following the death of His Majesty King Hussein indicate that fractured bilater-

al ties are on the mend after they hit a record low following the signing of Jordan's own 1994 peace treaty with Israel.

Syrian President Hafez Al Assad made a surprise visit to Jordan to attend the funeral of King Hussein on Feb. 8, set-

**'We look forward to an era of brotherly ties. We also hope to see the end of complications connected with security issues'**

ting foot in Amman for the first time since 1994.

He also sent his son, Bashar — being groomed to run Syria in the future — to meet His Majesty King Abdullah and to console him over the death of his father who ruled Jordan for 47 years.

who have become widows, children who have lost their parents and those who are in dire need of medical help. Our duty is to stand by them."

The Hashemite Charitable Organisation for the Kosovo crisis victims, which gathered the aid in implementation of His Majesty King Abdullah's directives, said it was planning to send more assistance.

Queen Rania received the C-130 cargo plane laden with 18,000 tonnes of medical supplies, biscuits, baby milk, blankets and tents at Skopje airport in Macedonia, where many Kosovars have fled.

The aid, worth \$180,000, was donated by individuals and charities.

Religious Affairs Minister

Abdul Salam Abbadi, HRH Prince Ali and HRH Prince Talal were also aboard the plane.

Abbadi said the shipment was the first of several planned for Kosovo refugees in the coming weeks.

"This aid is an expression of support for the people of Kosovo in the tragedy caused by the aggression and practices of the Serbian forces," Abbadi said.

Jordan earlier recalled its envoy to Yugoslavia in protest of Serb killings in Kosovo and the expulsion of ethnic Albanians.

Many of the 200,000 or so ethnic Albanian refugees on the move are in or heading to Macedonia and Albania.

especially as the late King Hussein had called for a comprehensive revision," Batikhi said.

"The changes, as understood by the King, aim to inject young and fresh blood into the administration for the sake of overcoming problems and to attain further progress and prosperity for Jordaniens," he explained.

"It has been reassured that there will be no changes in Jordan's political and principled stands. The new era is an extension of that which prevailed under King Hussein's reign, while executive authority is exercised through the King's appointed government in a manner that ensures continuity towards the achievement of what is best for the Kingdom."

Batikhi said he hoped to see "a higher level of (security) cooperation" between Jordan and its Arab and Gulf Arab neighbours.

"However, Jordan's security cooperation with the countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council is very good and we are satisfied with it. It is truly a cooperation between brothers."



Her Majesty Queen Rania holding hands with ethnic Albanian refugee children in this refugee camp outside Skopje on Thursday. Queen Rania travelled with a plane load of aid for refugees who fled the Kosovo crisis (Photo by Reuters)

## Queen returns from Kosovo aid mission

By a Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Her Majesty Queen Rania returned home late on Thursday after supervising the distribution of a plane load of relief supplies sent by Jordan to aid ethnic Albanian refugees fleeing Yugoslavia's war-torn Kosovo province.

In her first official foray abroad since she was proclaimed Queen on March 21, Her Majesty spoke of the suffering refugees and the dire need to help them.

"Our visit was not to express any political stand or to support one party against the other," she told journalists after arriving in Amman. "The visit aimed at helping those subjected to the worst treatment."

"I saw the catastrophic situation there... Women

King's visit and before King Abdullah ascended to the throne. However, the hospitality accorded to us in Saudi Arabia and King Fahd's reception of King Abdullah upon his arrival... are unprecedented by all standards," Batikhi said.

"We felt that this hospitality exceeded all our expectations and aspirations... What we saw exceeded brotherly commitment and mere backing for King Abdullah and Jordan in general. This has brought to us deep satisfaction."

Asked how King Abdullah's planned visit to Syria, Batikhi said, "we look forward to an era of brotherly ties. We also hope to see the end of complications connected with security issues."

King Abdullah's visit to Saudi Arabia last week further cemented bilateral ties that have gradually returned to their pre-Gulf crisis levels of warmth. Jordan angered Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states by its perceived support for Baghdad during the 1990-91 Gulf crisis, caused by Iraq's invasion of Kuwait.

"Relations with Saudi Arabia are very strong and marked by a brotherly spirit. They were so even before the

APPRECIATION AND GRATITUDE

The Batikhi family

extends its appreciation and gratitude to their excellencies, the heads and members of the foreign diplomatic corps in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan for expressing their sympathy over the passing of Tayseer Batikhi

Your condolences have been of great comfort to us in our bereavement.

### What's Going On

## Li-Sharif talks build on close Pakistan-China ties

ISLAMABAD (AP) — China's number two leader Li Peng held talks with Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif here Friday on cooperation between their closely allied countries, officials said.

Sources said the talks, which lasted more than an hour, covered economic, political and regional and international issues and matters relating to peace and regional security.

Representatives of the two later signed agreements to promote bilateral cooperation but details were not given.

Sharif later hosted a lunch for Li who was also scheduled to call on President Muhammad Rafiq Tarar, officials said.

Li, chairman of the National People's Congress (NPC), arrived Thursday for a visit that officials said forms part of high level exchanges between mainly Muslim Pakistan and Communist China, who have shared years of cooperation in economic and defence related areas.

They said the visit was important as it followed nuclear tests by Pakistan last May, in response to

similar detonations by rival India.

China has provided Pakistan with a 300 megawatt nuclear power plant and its collaboration has helped Pakistan in manufacturing Super-7 fighter aircraft and battle tanks.

Li, who pledged on arrival that China would further cement relations with Pakistan despite the changing international situation and make new contributions for peace and stability in the region.

Foreign Minister Sartaj Aziz and Senate chairman Wasim Sajjad will meet the Chinese parliamentary chief on Saturday, officials said.

"China will remain a trustworthy friend of Pakistan no matter what changes may take place in the regional and international situation," Li said.

"We will further strengthen our cooperation with Pakistan in international affairs, and make new contributions to peace and stability in our region and the world at large," he said.

Sharif visited China last year and Chinese Defence Minister General Chi Haotian visited Pakistan in February to reassure China's cooperation to Pakistan in maintaining a strategic balance.

"The profound changes in the international situation have brought us both



Chairman of China's National People's Congress Li Peng (center) walks with Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif (right) in Islamabad April 9. Li Peng held talks with Premier Sharif, focusing on regional and bilateral issues (Reuters photo)

## China human rights boss defends Tiananmen killings

BELING (R) — The head of a Chinese government-backed human rights body on Friday defended Beijing's 1989 crackdown on mass pro-democracy demonstrations, calling the protesters "flies and mosquitoes" who had bitten the government.

"We forgot to prepare flyswatters," said Zhu Muzhi, president of the China Society for Human Rights Studies, referring to the lack of rubber bullets, tear gas and other riot gear to quell the demonstrations.

The student-led protests centred on Beijing's Tiananmen Square were crushed by army tanks backed by troops with machine-guns on June 4, 1989. Hundreds died and many were jailed.

Zhu, who had served as a government spokesman after the crackdown, said he saw rioters pelt rocks at soldiers who did not fight back and set fire to an army truck.

"One soldier was thrown off a bridge," said Zhu, also a former minister of culture and president of the state news agency Xinhua. "The mob chased (him) down and

killed him." Zhu said the government had been patient but was "forced to shoot demonstrators in the end".

"We were bitten," Zhu said. "There was a boil. There was no other way but to have it surgically removed."

"Facts prove that the method used in the past cured the disease. It is not necessary to rethink whether another method could have been used," he said.

Zhu said that if the protests had not been crushed, China would have plunged into turmoil. "The people would have stood up," he said. "The past 10 years would not have been easy to pass by."

Police have constantly harassed bereaved families, demonstrators who had been wounded and pro-democracy activists campaigning for a reassessment of the crackdown.

Zhu said the protests aimed to overthrow the government, not merely denounce widespread corruption and galloping inflation.

The 1989 protests are officially labelled a counter-revolutionary rebellion aimed at toppling the government.

## Namibia auctions first ivory since 1989 ban

WINDHOEK, Namibia (AP) — Fourteen Japanese buyers gathered at a country club here Friday to bid on 13.8 tonnes of elephant tusks in the first legal sale of ivory since an international ban imposed in 1989.

The one-time sale is the first by Namibia, Zimbabwe and Botswana, which were granted permission Feb. 12 by a U.N. body to dispose of elephant tusk stockpiles.

The go-ahead by the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) provoked criticism by some conservationists, who fear the sale would promote poaching.

The ivory ban was imposed to help stem the slaughter of elephants, which suffered declining populations in some parts of Africa.

The Namibian auction will be followed by auctions involving 59 tonnes next week in the other two countries.

The ban will remain in effect after the sales, said Jim Armstrong, deputy secretary-general of Geneva-based CITES.

Armstrong said that if there is any evidence in an upsurge in poaching because of the sale, future such auctions would be ruled out.

The ivory here was up for auction in 500-kilogramme lots. It comes from natural deaths and the culling of problem animals only, said Malan Lindeque, the environment ministry's chief elephant expert.

Nearly every tusk sold can be traced to individual elephants that died over the last 15 years. Another 28 tonnes of ivory confiscated from poachers and smugglers remain under lock and key in a government vault elsewhere in Windhoek. Lindeque declined to comment on the potential value of the ivory stockpile, but at the time of the ban, ivory was selling for \$300 per kilogramme.

On Thursday, the Japanese buyers inspected the lots. Most of the 14 buyers represent traditional "hanko" carving businesses in Japan, which create elaborate signature seals from the malleable ivory for wealthy clients. Japan is the leading consumer of ivory.

The ban has hit the traditional Japanese industry hard, and the shortage of ivory has put many of them out of business, said Tamaso Ishibashi, president of the Japan Federation of Ivory Arts and Crafts Association.

"This is what we do for a living. We have no other business," he said. "The ban has affected us. We have lost more than 50 per cent of traditional carvers from the industry since the ban," he said.

According to the CITES decision, revenue generated from the sale must be ploughed back into conservation measures. The three countries also had to meet strict guidelines on anti-poaching and control of the ivory.

Armstrong said CITES was assisting other countries like Kenya and Tanzania to find donors willing to sponsor the disposal of valuable stockpiles to non-commercial institutions like museums.

"They can burn it, bury it, stick it in a museum, but may not sell it for any commercial purposes like carving."

Africa's elephant herds are estimated to have declined from about 1.3 million in 1975 to about 650,000 at present.

Selling ivory, even under strictly controlled conditions, sends the wrong signal to the black market, especially in a politically and economically unstable Africa, conservationists say.

## Russian journalist says he doesn't expect fair trial

Vладивосток, Russia (AP) — A Russian military journalist accused of revealing secrets about Russia's navy said Friday he believed that the trial against him was being rigged by people intent on keeping him behind bars.

Naval Capt. Grigory Pasko is charged with treason and espionage and could face up to 20 years in prison if convicted, but details of the precise charges have not been made public.

The case is being heard in secret by the navy's Pacific Fleet court in the eastern port city of Vladivostok.

"I am not expecting that the trial will be fair," Pasko said before a court session Friday, according to the Interfax news agency.

"Everything indicates that it will be a sham, not a proper trial. The true criminals are at large, doing everything to prevent me from being released, even though there is every reason for that," Pasko said.

Pasko, a reporter for the Pacific

## Malaysia says viral outbreak contained

KUALA LUMPUR (AP) — Malaysia announced Friday that it has contained a deadly viral outbreak that claimed the lives of more than 100 people and crippled its once-prosperous hog industry.

But even as Deputy Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, who heads the viral task force, announced that the virus had been contained, there were conflicting reports on the number of deaths it caused.

Abdullah said the two suspected killer viruses believed to spread from pigs to humans were no longer wreaking havoc in the central state of Negeri Sembilan and several other parts of the country.

"It can be said that we have achieved success and the outbreak has been contained," he told reporters at a press conference that was closed to the foreign media.

The court has decided to call three Japanese journalists to testify in Pasko's trial, but defense lawyer Oleg Kotlyarov said Friday they were unlikely to come to Russia to appear in court, Interfax reported.

hogs from spreading the viruses. So far, soldiers have destroyed more than 700,000 pigs out of a targeted 1 million.

The unprecedented six-month viral outbreak has thrown the southeast Asian nation into confusion. Pig farmers abandoned their homes in February after health officials warned that they could be bitten by the culex mosquito, which carries the Japanese encephalitis virus, originally thought to be the culprit.

Workers in piggeries and abattoirs are highly at risk, but there is so far no evidence of transmission from person to person or from eating cooked pork, the WHO regional office said in a statement Friday.

It said that there have been 11 confirmed cases, including one death, in Singapore. All the victims were abattoir workers who had contact with pigs from Malaysia.

Symptoms are the same: high fever, aches, eventual coma and death.

CDC spokesman Tom Skinner told the Associated Press on Thursday that the virus had never been seen before and that researchers were still struggling with a

means to treat its victims. In Manila, the regional office of the World Health Organisation said that based on human cases under treatment, the incubation period for the virus ranges from four to 18 days, with the first symptom being a severe headache.

Workers in piggeries and abattoirs are highly at risk, but there is so far no evidence of transmission from person to person or from eating cooked pork, the WHO regional office said in a statement Friday.

It said that there have been 11 confirmed cases, including one death, in Singapore. All the victims were abattoir workers who had contact with pigs from Malaysia.

The mysterious virus, which resembles the very rare hendra virus first detected in Australia in 1994, has claimed more than two-thirds of the total number of victims — a figure which is also in dispute.

Thursday's weekly report

by the U.S. Centres for Disease Control and Prevention said that based on human cases under treatment, the incubation period for the virus ranges from four to 18 days, with the first symptom being a severe headache.

Workers in piggeries and abattoirs are highly at risk, but there is so far no evidence of transmission from person to person or from eating cooked pork, the WHO regional office said in a statement Friday.

It said that there have been 11 confirmed cases, including one death, in Singapore. All the victims were abattoir workers who had contact with pigs from Malaysia.

The mysterious virus, which resembles the very rare hendra virus first detected in Australia in 1994, has claimed more than two-thirds of the total number of victims — a figure which is also in dispute.

If the horses are infected, they may have to be destroyed, said the department's director-general, Mohd Nordin Mohd Nor.

The department has banned all movement of horses and directed all establishments and individuals to screen all horses for

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### 11 held in Sri Lanka's biggest kidnapping for ransom case

COLOMBO (AP) — A police officer and 10 others were arrested and most of the ransom money was recovered in Sri Lanka's biggest kidnapping for ransom case, police said Friday. A police officer, three military deserters and seven others have been arrested in the past week and 17 million others have been arrested in the past week and 17 million rupees (\$261,000) recovered in the March 30 kidnapping of a company director. The director was released a day later when his wife paid the ransom money, said police officer Nuwan Wedasinghe. The kidnappers, who included a police officer, stopped G.C. Wickremasinghe's vehicle at Colombo's posh golf club and took him and the driver to a hide-out in the suburbs. They then called the tycoon's wife and threatened to kill him if she did not pay the ransom. They released his driver later. The wife raised money through her relatives and paid the ransom later. She then alerted the police. The family also gave police the number on the currency notes they paid as ransom. Police informed all banks about the numbers. Earlier this week, a bank manager near Colombo noticed a deposit made with the same notes and called the police. The man was arrested and following information given by him all the others were held.

### Japanese navy officer found hanged after exam scandal

TOKYO (AP) — The Japanese navy found a senior officer hanged on a warship on Friday, officials said, as the military prepared to investigate a promotion examinations scandal. The officer of the Maritime Self-Defence Force was found hanging early Friday in a helicopter hanger on the escort vessel Sawayuki, now anchored at the port of the northern Japan city of Mutsu, a spokesman said. The officer was unconscious at the scene but died at a hospital later. He apparently "committed suicide," the spokesman said, adding the force was yet to find the motive. "We also refrain from disclosing the officer's name by considering his bereaved family's feelings," he said. The suicide came on the eve of the launch of an investigation committee on suspected wrongdoings at last month's promotion tests in which the dead officer served as an examiner. "Several senior officers are suspected of having tipped off correct answers to subordinates at the examinations," the spokesman said.

### South African who shot gorilla gets 40 years

JOHANNESBURG (R) — A South African man who shot a gorilla while fleeing from police has been sentenced to 40 years in prison. South African radio said on Friday, Max the gorilla, a star attraction at Johannesburg zoo, became a folk hero in crime-ridden South Africa in July 1997 after he helped police to capture Isaac Mofokeng. Mofokeng ran blindly into Max's den while being pursued by police after he tried to break into a nearby home. Max pinned the fugitive against the wall of his enclosure and kept guard even after Mofokeng shot him in the chest. During his trial, Mofokeng said Max had bitten him on the buttocks. "I thought my last hour had come," he said. Mofokeng, a former policeman, was found guilty on 10 of the 11 charges he faced for various crimes, including rape and housebreaking. The South African broadcasting corporation said. His 40-year prison sentence included five years for malicious injury to the gorilla.

### One dies in bitter battle between student organisations

KARACHI (AP) — Students armed with chains, broken bottles and iron rods fought a bitter battle at Karachi University Friday killing one student and injuring several others, police said. They said members of rival student organisations fought for about 45 minutes, before police and university security guards intervened. Classes were temporarily suspended. One student died after being beaten with an iron rod, police said. Police are conducting an investigation, and so far say they do not know what caused the fight involving members of the Islamic conservative Islami Jamiat-e-Tulabai and the Punjabi Student Association. More than 10,000 students are enrolled at Karachi University located on the northern edge of the city.

### Protest demonstration spins out of control, killing 2 policemen

PESHAWAR, Pakistan (AP) — A protest demonstration spun out of control Friday leaving two policemen dead and six other policemen seriously injured, officials said. They said hundreds of people organised a protest in Michni, some 25 kilometres west of Peshawar, to protest a government decision to amalgamate their remote region with a nearby municipality. Several of the protesters were armed and when police tried to break up the demonstration they apparently opened fire on police, police officials said. There were reports of return fire from the police, but it was not immediately clear whether any of the demonstrators were killed or injured. The protest began after the government announced it would amalgamate 44 villages in remote northeastern Pakistan with nearby Charsadda district. Previously these villages were aligned to the tribal region of Pakistan, an area where tribal law is supreme. The government of Pakistan's authority often is challenged in the tribal region and generally loses out to tribal authority. In the tribal belt most people are heavily armed and laws are made and enforced according to the dictates of tribal elders. Police said they were investigating the shooting incident, but so far there were no reports of arrests having been made.

### Separatist group in southern Thailand blamed for explosion

BANGKOK (AP) — An explosion outside a shop in Thailand on Friday was the work of Muslim separatists, a letter found at the site of the blast in Chiang Narathiwat province, 1,140 kilometres south of Bangkok, was signed by two leading members of the New Pala, a separatist group active in Thailand's four southernmost provinces, the report by ITV said. It reported that police found the letter, which threatened the shop owner with death if he did not pay 300,000 baht (\$8,020). The explosion did minor damage to the shop's gate and a building across the street, ITV reported. Several small groups in southern Thailand engage in sporadic terrorism, ostensibly in support of Malay separatism. Thailand's four southernmost provinces have a Muslim, mostly Malay, majority while the rest of the country is overwhelmingly Buddhist.



**CONTRACT KILLING** — Police officers stand around the body of Gennady Tuganov, a nationalist politician who was gunned down in an apparent contract killing in St. Petersburg on Friday, according to a news report. Tuganov, who ran the St. Petersburg branch of the ultranationalist Liberal Democratic Party, was shot eight times in the head as he entered his apartment, the Interfax news agency said. He died on the spot. Officials with LDP were quoted by Interfax as saying that the killing was probably a contract hit aimed at stopping Tuganov's "political and public activities." Police were investigating the case, but so far no suspects have been found. Scores of gangland assassinations are reported across Russia every year, but the killers usually escape and authorities rarely make any progress in the cases. St. Petersburg has grown into a particularly crime-ridden city even by Russian standards in recent months, with a number of apparent contract hits against business people and politicians (Reuters photo)

## Indianapolis men protest treatment in Zimbabwe prison

HARARE, Zimbabwe (AP) — Three Americans arrested on allegations of spying, terrorism and sabotage are being held alone in windowless cells and are forced to sleep naked, shackled in leg irons, under continuous electric lighting, their lawyer said Friday.

Attorney Jeremy Callow said the three Indianapolis men, arrested on weapons charges March 7 at Harare's main airport, also were denied daily exercise in the yard at Chikurubi maximum security prison.

"Such circumstances constitute unlawful solitary confinement and punishment," Callow told Harare magistrate Weston Nyamwanza.

He said prison conditions endured by John Lamonte Dixon, 39, Gary George Blanchard, 34, and Joseph Wendell Pentjoh, 35, were "inhuman and degrading" and breached Zimbabwe's constitutional provisions on rights of prisoners awaiting trial.

Zimbabwean authorities allege the men spied on Congolese forces and their allies, including Zimbabwe troops, fighting against rebels backed by Rwanda and Uganda in the 8-month Congo civil war.

Saying they are missionaries, the men, arrested on weapons charges March 7 at Harare's main airport, also were denied daily exercise in the yard at Chikurubi maximum security prison.

They deny allegations they spied or were planning sabotage and assassinations in Congo and Zimbabwe and insist the guns were for self-defence, hunting and were fired for fun.

Callow said protests over their prison conditions so far were ignored by authorities and he will next week ask the nation's highest court, the supreme court, to intervene if those conditions are not eased.

In an expanded document

Nyamwanza noted the complaints and remanded the three to reappear in court April 23.

Callow said the men were allowed to speak only with the prison chaplain or their lawyer. The largest of the three cells was 4.5 metres by 1.5 metres and each was lit around the clock, leading to disorientation. The men's wrist-watches had been confiscated.

Prison authorities and police also failed to arrange a lineup of interrogating officers enabling the three to pick out officers they allege tortured them.

A defence request for the lineups was granted by another magistrate on March 26.

The men allege they were beaten on the soles of their feet, assaulted and subjected to electric shocks and near-suffocation torture for six days after their arrest.

The Americans face a maximum penalty of life imprisonment on weapons possession charges alone.

## At least two reported dead as fresh rioting breaks out in Indonesia

JAKARTA, Indonesia (AP) — At least two people were reportedly killed in a fresh outbreak of riots between Christians and Muslims on Friday in eastern Indonesia.

One person was killed in the town of Amahai on Seram island and the other died in Tual city on Kei Kecil island, according to local police and the official Antara news agency.

Both areas are located in Maluku province, some 2,800 kilometres east of Jakarta, the Indonesian

capital.

In Tual, a man disembarking from a ship was beheaded, while another man was severely injured, local police said.

The cause of death in the other killing was not immediately known.

Meanwhile, Antara reported at least 12 partially decomposed bodies of people believed to have been killed last week were found in a village on Kei Kecil island.

The death toll from the unrest in southern Maluku

which began late last month now totals at least 103 people. The troubled district is part of an area once known as the Spice Islands which has been hit by a wave of religious rioting since January.

The centre of the violence has been in the provincial capital of Ambon, where at least 200 people have died. The military has sent about 6,000 troops to the province, one-sixth of which were dispatched to Southeast Asia.

More than 200 people have been killed in a separate bout of ethnic violence which erupted last month in west Kalimantan, an Indonesian province on the island of Borneo. Indigenous Malay and Dayak people attacked

religious and ethnic tensions, economic hardship and disputes over the course of Indonesia's transition to democracy have fuelled the unrest since the downfall last May of authoritarian President Suharto.

Family planning experts, for their part, warned that the chances of being able to time a birth to an exact date were very slim.

A spokeswoman for the British Pregnancy Advisory Service said that even a fertile couple who had sex Saturday at a fertile time in a woman's cycle only stood a one in four chance of conceiving, and 20 per cent of conceptions ended spontaneously in miscarriage.

Will women who sign up to TV companies and sponsors be asked to have a caesarean to make sure they have their baby on January 1?" a church spokeswoman asked.

Family planning experts

said: "It could cause a lot of problems."

"To time a birth with that degree of accuracy is something that is fraught with problems," she said.

"I think the notion that the whole nation is going to be barking tomorrow night in order to have a bay on a certain day is absurd."

"Of course there will be a minority of people who may think they could gain financially out of having a millennium baby — but they obviously have a problem anyway."

The millennium baby craze has been fuelled by media publicity, with television channels preparing special hospital transmissions in search of the first

## Parliament puts off final decision on Yeltsin impeachment

MOSCOW (AP) — Parliament on Friday put off a final decision on when to open an impeachment debate against President Boris Yeltsin, which is tentatively set to begin April 15.

Gennady Seleznyov, the speaker of parliament's lower house, told lawmakers that Yeltsin suggested on Friday that the impeachment debate be delayed. But Yeltsin spokesman Dmitry Yakushkin countered the claim, saying the president does not want the impeachment vote postponed.

Pro-government lawmakers proposed delaying the impeachment debate, set to start next Thursday.

But parliament, dominated by hardliners bent on Yeltsin's ouster, decided that it needed more time to consider the issue and will vote next week on whether to delay an impeachment debate.

The impeachment motion is considered a long-shot,

but Yeltsin's frequent illnesses and Russia's economic crisis have weakened his power and made his ouster more likely than it once was.

The motion must win a two-thirds majority in both houses of parliament and approval by Russia's highest courts. The upper house, the Federation Council, has been more supportive of Yeltsin than the lower house.

A Duma panel has charged Yeltsin with instigating the 1991 Soviet collapse, improperly using force against hard-line lawmakers in 1993, launching a botched war in Chechnya, bringing the nation's military to ruin and waging genocide against the Russian people by pursuing economic policies that impoverished the country.

The charges were initiated by the Communists and other hardliners, but the Liberal Yabloko Faction said it would back

impeachment on one count — launching the 1994-96 war in Chechnya.

Yeltsin said on Friday that he wasn't going to introduce an state of emergency, ban the Communist party or fire Prime Minister Yevgeny Primakov — all rumours that had been circulating in parliament on Friday.

"We can't ban the Communist Party," Yeltsin said in the Kremlin.

"This will backfire, because Russian people are quick to feel pity for victims of oppression." He also denied that his meeting on Thursday with former Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin signalled a plan to bring him back to replace Primakov.

"Don't believe these rumours about my plans to fire Primakov," he said. "It's nothing but the speculation and rumour. I believe that Primakov is useful at this stage, and later we shall see." Yeltsin also used the occasion to try to con-

vince the regional leaders, who are all members of the parliament's upper house, to fire Prosecutor General Yuri Skuratov when they debate his resignation again on April 21.

Skuratov has been investigating alleged Kremlin corruption, and Yeltsin tried to fire him in February. The upper house refused to sanction the ouster at the time.

State television ran a video that showed a man who appeared to be Skuratov having sex with two women identified as prostitutes. Yeltsin then suspended Skuratov, who submitted his resignation a second time. The house must again decide whether to accept it.

"It's a shame and disgrace for Russia to have such a prosecutor," Yeltsin said. "You must take a clear position to an end to this scandal. You mustn't act like last time ... when you failed to support the president."

## India's embattled Hindu nationalists court allies

NEW DELHI (AFP) — India's ruling Hindu nationalists on Friday won minor opposition groups in a desperate bid to cling to power, as cracks grew in their fragile coalition government.

Officials said Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee's BJP party was trying to lure at least three small parties — with 15 seats between them — into supporting the coalition in the event of a no-confidence vote in parliament.

Vajpayee's 13-month-old multi-party coalition has barely 280 members in the 545-seat parliament. It will lose its tenuous majority if a key ally — the AIADMK with 18 MPs — quits the alliance next week as widely expected.

The AIADMK, the second largest member in the ruling coalition, has already withdrawn its ministers from the cabinet and on Friday went a step further by pulling out of the coalition's coordination committee.

In a statement, the AIADMK said it would work towards providing India with "a government

that is both just and effective in the shortest possible time."

Referring to the influence of Hindu fundamentalist groups on the government, the statement said Vajpayee's

BJP had failed to escape "the dark shadow of hardliners who sought to take India back to the medieval period."

Significantly, however, the statement stopped short of announcing the party's total withdrawal of support for the coalition.

Meanwhile, BJP spokesman J.P. Mathur tried a new tack in his party's war of words with the opposition Congress, warning that a fresh coalition made up of opposition parties would spell economic ruin.

"If our opponents succeed, they won't be able to manage the situation," Mathur said. "The economic stability and progress we gave to the nation will be in doubt."

A.B. Bardhan, chief of the Communist Party of India, told AFP his party was prepared to support a Congress-led government to replace Vajpayee's administration.

"The government is on its way out. The fall is imminent. We have to work out

the contours of an alternative government so that the country is not subjected to expensive mid-term elections," he said.

The Congress and the Communists have a traditionally adversarial relationship but their mutual antipathy for Vajpayee's Hindu-nationalist BJP party has proved a stronger binding force.

Bardhan's statement came three days after India's main communist party — the Communist Party of India-Marxist (CPI-M) — announced its backing for a Congress bid for power.

CPI-M leader Harkishan Singh Surjeet is widely believed to be helping Congress coordinate its strategy for the coming months.

The Asian Age daily on Friday quoted an unidentified top civil servant who scoffed at the government's continued show of bravado in the face of the deepening crisis.

"It's exactly like when the Titanic was hit by an iceberg. The plates are all laid out, the crockery is on the table," he said.

## Worries about race for millennium baby in Britain

LONDON (AFP) — British nurses and church authorities expressed concern Friday about an unofficial race among couples here to produce the first baby of the new millennium.

The warning came on the eve of the day on which experts predict births which will take place Jan. 1, 2000, are most likely to be conceived.

Consultants are worried that a rash of heavily-pregnant women in hospitals over the end of year holiday season could be a recipe for disaster, with skeleton staff in hospitals unable to cope with the number of women in labour.

Women's health adviser for the Royal College of Nursing, Vicki Allanach, said: "It could cause a lot of problems."

"We are already overstretched and have shortages of both nurses and midwives."

"We have got enough unplanned pregnancies in this country. The decision shouldn't be taken because there is a cash incentive."

The Church of England, meanwhile, condemned what it termed a media "hype" and said it was worried at the lengths that couples would go to in a bid to get the glare of publicity. "How far will this go?

Will women who sign up to TV companies and sponsors be asked to have a caesarean to make sure they have their baby on January 1?" a church spokeswoman asked.

Family planning experts

said: "It could cause a lot of problems."

"To time a birth with that degree of accuracy is something that is fraught with problems," she said.

"I think the notion that the whole nation is going to be barking tomorrow night in order to have a bay on a certain day is absurd."

"Of course there will be a minority of people who may think they could gain financially out of having a millennium baby — but they obviously have a problem anyway."

The millennium baby craze has been fuelled by media publicity, with television channels preparing special hospital transmissions in search of the first

British baby to be born on Jan. 1, 2000.

The private ITV channel

on Saturday is to screen a two-hour show entitled "Birth Race 2000: Tonight's the Night" with a guide to conception, romantic films and a documentary on couples who are hoping for a January 1 baby.

The Superdrug chain of chemists is also joining in the frenzy, offering free pregnancy testing kits in all its 180 stores in Britain to parents aiming for a January 1 birth.

The chain has noted a 50 per cent increase in the sales of ovulation-test kits over the last few months.

Two polar bears play at their enclosure on a warm day at the Cologne zoo April 9. Weather forecast reports warm weather for the upcoming weekend in Germany (Reuters photo)

## Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published in English by the Jordan Press Foundation Established 1973  
جريدة الأردنية المستقلة الصادرة باللغة العربية

Chairman of the Board of Directors  
Abdel Salam Tarawneh

Vice Chairman & Director General  
Mohammad Amad

Executive Editor  
Abdullah Hasana

Responsible Editor  
Elia Nasrallah

Editorial and Advertising offices  
Jordan Press Foundation,  
University Road, P.O. Box 6710, Amman  
Telephones: 5684311, 5699634, 5667171, 5603585  
Facsimile: 5696183

E-mail: [jotimes@go.com.jo](mailto:jotimes@go.com.jo)  
Web Site: <http://www.access2arabia.com/jordantimes/>

The Jordan Times is published daily except Fridays. Subscription and advertising rates are available from the Jordan Times Advertising Department

### Collective remedy

THE FACT that Prime Minister Abdur-Rauf S. Rawabdeh and his government received an unprecedented strong vote of confidence Thursday when 66 deputies stood in favour of his platform does not mean that the road ahead will be strewn with roses. The coming days are the time when the premier's Cabinet will have to roll up their sleeves and translate their policy statement into deeds.

The prime minister has already conceded that economic growth is projected to drop to about 3 per cent. With such a dire prediction, the solution to the high unemployment crisis and rampant poverty, the hallmarks of the government's goals will not be easy. It is no accident that His Majesty King Abdullah's first step in the wake of the overwhelming vote of confidence in Rawabdeh and his team was to call on him to translate into actions what the letter of designation had outlined in great detail and what the government's platform pledged to the country.

It is obvious that no government can on its own carry out all that needs to be done in the upcoming months. The people of Jordan are also called upon to implement their share of the responsibility with each sector according to its capabilities and duties. The kind of free economy and privatisation that we have painted for ourselves requires the full participation of the private sector in uplifting the national economy from its current stagnation. True capital investment needs a certain favourable climate which the government promised to create. But once the government has done its share of the burden and established the appropriate climate for investment, it becomes the responsibility of the private sector to reciprocate by expressing its vote of confidence in its own way.

The public at large also has its share of the burden. Whether wage earners or salaried employees, it is the public who determine the course of the national market. In the final analysis, it is the consumers who cast the ultimate vote of confidence. That is why we all have to pitch in and work in concert to make the future brighter and more productive.

### ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

Al Rai's Taher Adwan commented on the Lower House of Parliament's decision to give the vote of confidence to the government, saying it is a Constitutional necessity and a green light to the Cabinet to go ahead with its plans. However, Adwan added, every Jordanian government needs the people's confidence to remain in authority, as the parliamentary vote of confidence does not mean that the government will rule for two or four years. Although only the King can designate or dismiss governments, there is a relation between the King and the people, which determines whether the government will continue or not. said the writer.

Although it is not easy to satisfy all people, the government should obtain the confidence of Jordanians, who are aware of the current challenges and that there are no magical solutions, said the writer adding that if the government succeeds in managing the Kingdom's affairs and combating corruption, it will win people's confidence. Finally, Adwan concluded, criticism, which is a motivation for the government to tackle obstacles, must not paralyse officials' performance and their ability to work on solutions to pressing problems.

Al Rai's Fahed Fanek said that while Israel receives 90 per cent of one million Christian pilgrims visiting the Holy Lands annually from the US and Europe, Jordan is limited to 10 per cent despite the many attractive tourist sites in the Kingdom. Fanek noted that in the year 2000, the number of pilgrims will increase to at least 4 million, which should boost the tourism industry in the country. Jordan is preparing for the event, especially after the discovery of the baptism site east of the Jordan River, which has been authenticated by the Pope, according to the writer. Israel has always been promoting a site located south of Lake Tiberias, which was visited by 400,000 tourists a year. But now Jordan is expected to receive tens of thousands of tourists, thanks to Minister of Tourism and Antiquities Aqel Bilini's efforts to put the Kingdom on the 2000 tourist map, said Fanek. Tourism, which is an exporting industry, represents Jordan's oil, and it provides the country with \$750 million annually, more than the exports of the phosphate and potash industries put together, according to Fanek. This amount can easily be doubled if the country concentrates efforts for that purpose, and is now more practical because of the increasing numbers of hotels in Amman and other places. The year 2000 provides an excellent tourist opportunity, will Jordan meet this challenge, asked Fanek.

## Predetermining the outcome of the peace process

### Jordanian Perspective



Dr. Musa Keilani

is unanimous agreement that the Palestinians and Israel might never be able to reach an equitable agreement on the refugees, but, beyond that is the reality that Israel has been very pointedly dragging its feet on the immediate issue of the displaced. The former Israeli government of Shimon Peres made it abundantly clear that Arab countries which host the displaced and refugees should look for avenues to absorb their guests into their societies and "rehabilitate them." Why then the specific clauses referring to negotiations on the future of the displaced and refugees if Israel had and has no intention of recognising their rights? Wasn't that predetermining the outcome of the peace process on the part of Israel?

The list of Israeli contradictions is too long, and they are not new. We are fully aware that the dice are loaded against the Arabs every step of the way, and Israel will stop at nothing to fight off pressure from any quarters, whether European or American, to see reason in the quest for peace in the Middle East. It is up to the Europeans and Americans to fully understand the Israeli game and play their cards accordingly.

## Why Jordan matters

By David Rosenberg

THE DEATH of King Hussein will almost certainly have significant consequences for the future of Middle East peace. But in the Israeli economic constellation, any fallout from cooler relations with Jordan would seem marginal.

Israel-Jordanian trade reached just \$42 million last year, about the same as Israel's trade with Bulgaria.

In any event, Jordanian exports don't stay in Israel but go on to the Palestinian [National] Authority, a more appropriate market for Jordanian products. Israeli companies have invested about \$50 million in Jordan, not an especially big amount. The entire Jordanian economy is about \$8 billion a year vs. Israel's \$100 billion.

Compared to other Arab countries, Jordan has been highly receptive to Israeli trade and investment. Still, if the border were shut tight tomorrow, statistically speaking, it would barely register as a blip on the Israeli economic screen.

The deeper truth, though, is that Jordan counts economically much more than it appears on several levels.

Jordan and the rest of the Arab World are the key to the survival of many of Israel's low-tech industries. In the world of open trade and investment, Israeli firms can only compete if they can compete internationally. But in fields like textiles and basic manufacturing, where the labour-cost component is a major factor, Israel doesn't stand a chance against international competitors because the wages it pays are too high. If these industries aren't going to die, the solution is to transfer production via direct investment, joint ventures or — subcontracting to Israel's lower-cost neighbours.

Jordan is the chief candidate for this practice, called "outsourcing," because it boasts a combination of low wages, good infrastructure, a stable political and legal environment and, of course, it's right next door. There is much to be said for having your factory 90 minutes' drive from your headoffice rather than a 12-hour flight away. Jordan's two main competitors — the PNA and Egypt — have many of the same assets, but not all of them.

Israel's textile industry has been the first to act on this, and is the source of most Israeli investment in Jordan, Egypt and the Palestinian areas. Today, 10 per cent of "Israeli" textile and apparel exports are produced in the Arab World. Given time, other industries will no doubt follow.

The second reason Jordan

"...if the border [between Israel and Jordan] were shut tight tomorrow... it would barely register as a blip on the Israeli economic screen'

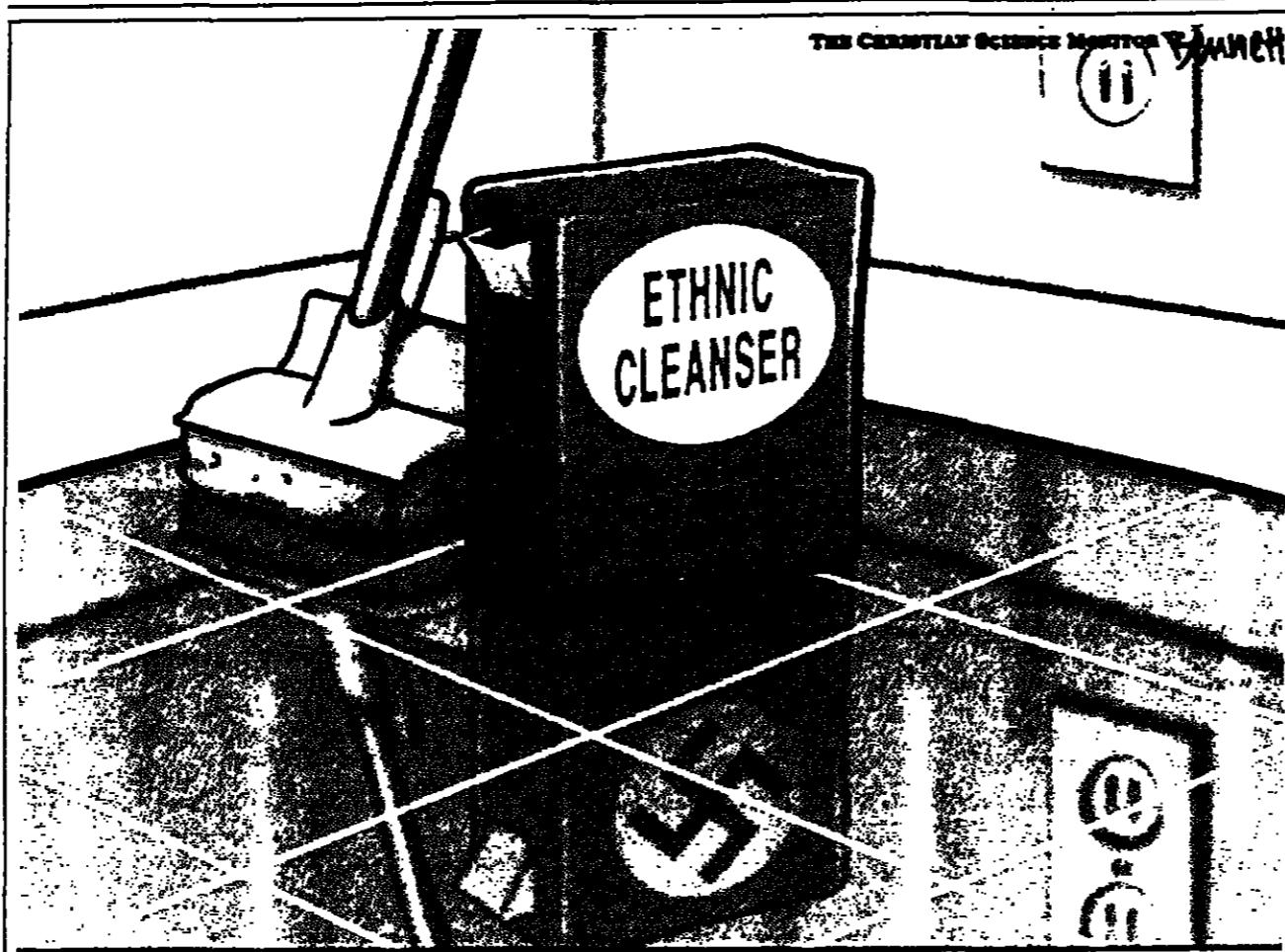
counts is more fundamental to Middle East peace than business. That's because Jordan has become the model for the long-heralded but little evidenced "peace dividend." Although total investment and trade is small, commercial relations between Israel and Jordan only go back to the signing of a commercial treaty in 1996. In that short time, one industrial park has been developed, two more are on the way and as many as 3,000 jobs have been created in Jordan. Thanks to Washington's efforts, the parks enjoy the same duty-free access to the U.S. as Israel does.

None of this adds up to an economic bonanza, but it does show that peace can lead to concrete economic benefits.

The response of many Jordanians has been, in so many words, "thanks for nothing" because Israeli investment creates low-paying factory jobs, while Israel retains management and most skilled positions. Certainly there is an element of justice in this claim, and Israelis would be naive to assume — as most do now — that this kind of relationship can be sustained indefinitely.

But the reality is that Jordan and other Arab countries have low wage scales, and that is for now their principal competitive advantage to the world economy. And those are the kind of badly needed jobs they can create. Jordan also has a relatively well-educated population, so it can and should aspire to better things quickly. With Israel (at least for now) badly in need of engineers, the day may come sooner than either side expects.

— *The Jerusalem Report*



## Dialectics in Jordan: Light versus dark

IF EXISTENCE, as a number of religions and philosophical schools speculate, is an eternal battle between diametrically opposed forces, then Jordan presents one of the best arenas in which to witness at least a portion of this cosmic conflict. Various belief systems have described such an unending confrontation in a number of ways: "good" versus "evil," the basis of the three major monotheistic religions, "class struggle," the central tenet of Marxism, and "The Force," which seemingly battles itself throughout the three Star Wars films, are just a few examples. For those persons currently living in Jordan, the bizarre decision to remain on winter time may make one think that the country has chosen to take sides in the Zoroastrian version of the eternal conflict: light versus dark.

By disregarding geographical realities, regional and worldwide norms and practices, and plenty of what I would term good advice, the government, in rejecting daylight savings time, has firmly placed the population of the country in the dark camp of this battle. No longer will those misguided advocates of light hold sway of the proponents of dark, led by Jordan, which has taken upon itself the task of carrying the banner of dimness to all parts of the world.

Consider the ramifications of this timing decision. While people in neighbouring countries are going about their business in a carefree, easy, and light manner, aided by the additional hour of glorious twilight of an afternoon sun, the populace of Jordan must bolt for their poorly lit warrens like a pack of unwilling vampires at 6:00 (1900 GMT) in the evening. Amman is fully lit while Damascus, Cairo and Tel Aviv still enjoy the natural, and cost-free, illumination of the friendly sun.

Cost, incidentally, was apparently the main factor in the decision to retain winter time. In another odd

angle to the story, however, the move to shun daylight savings time wasn't taken because of high costs, but for the opposite reason. Summer time didn't save enough money to make it feasible, only JD500,000 or so. Surprising, for a country facing severe austerity measures and terms stipulated by that bastion of sound economic advice, the IMF, to turn its nose up at any cost-effective measure. But then again, it does make sense, in a way, when you consider that second requirement of life, water, flowing in torrents down the streets of the capital. Did someone say waste not, want not?

It also seems rather strange to attempt a radical restructuring of what I assumed was a common international understanding of the earth's rotation. When it is 5:00 p.m. in Jordan, it is 7:00 p.m. in Iraq, a country that immediately borders Jordan, and 6:00 p.m. in Egypt and Israel, countries that are farther west. Amman and Paris, as one person pointed out, are effectively in the same time zone. Galileo must be turning in his grave thanks to this illogical situation. Can we really afford to throw away centuries of precious scientific effort which proved that the earth is round and revolves in a counterclockwise manner, i.e., east to west?

Finally, while I understand the need to be different, there may be a limit to how far others in the international community will tolerate an oddball country, or, as others with more hardline views than mine might decide to term Jordan, a rogue state. It could turn out to be a serious situation. After all, time, as the saying goes, is money. And other, wealthier countries may not take it kindly if Jordan's experiment with weird time zones goes horribly wrong and costs them hard currency. I have to admit that I'm not sure how this situation could come about, but stranger things have happened.

But while we wait for the sanc-

### Out of Order



Brian Brown

tions to be slapped in place and the bombs to fall in order to force Jordan to adhere to the principles and standards of the international community, we might as well try to wring some kind of advantage out of a bad situation. And as usual, I have devised the perfect means of doing so. Jordan will mount an intensive international public relations campaign to convince people to put aside their fears of visiting a country that keeps odd time, highlighting everything the country has to offer: archaeology, the Aqaba resort city, Jesus' baptism site, etc. As an added bonus, each visitor will receive a complimentary copy of the Jordan Times. But what will make this new campaign a sure-fire success will be its slogan, which captures the new spirit in the country ushered in by the bold winter time decision: "There's always time for Jordan."

**RECOMMENDED READING:**  
*Metamorphosis*, by Franz Kafka. While we're on the subject of weird occurrences, try this classic by Kafka. Gregor, the protagonist, awakes one morning to find that he has become a large insect. Following this transformation, he is shunned as an outcast, even by his own family. A seminal tale of alienation.

Gas mask

The S

## Features

By Roufan Nahhas

AMMAN — Umm Nasser, mother of seven boys and five girls, leaves her home in eastern Amman and heads towards the other side of town. On her way, she takes a glimpse at the beautiful houses, and stops with a sigh at a life she will never live.

Umm Nasser is a gypsy. She lives with her family in what is now known as Wadi Marbat, also known as Gypsy's Bridge or Jisr Al Nawaz. Her husband and three of her sons, one of which is waiting for a visa to the Gulf, work at the Amman Municipality. Their house has three bedrooms, but as she puts it, "it keeps us close."

Based on linguistic evidence, the similarity between the Romany and Hindi languages, indicates that gypsies originated from north-western India. The first migration dates back to the 5th century and was reportedly an exodus of 12,000 musicians, hence the common stereotype of the gypsy player. Another followed at the time of the Muslim invasions of northern India in the early 800's. Several waves of invasions resulted in emigrations to south-eastern Europe in the early 1300s, central/eastern Europe in the 1400s and western and northern Europe later in the 1400s into the early 1500s.

Since the 1400s gypsies in Europe have been persecuted, banished, forced to integrate and enslaved; an estimated 600,000 gypsies were exterminated by the Nazis.

The situation in the Middle East was hardly better. Gypsies originated from the Bani Moura tribe who had to abandon their lands after losing a battle against Al Zeer tribe after which Al Zeer's chief Abu Laila Al Muhalhal forbade them to ride horses and forced them to use donkeys instead. During his tough rule they were humiliated and forced to move and leave their lands.

Today, gypsies are no longer so much in touch with their traditions, values or even their colourful dresses, and the gypsy life held a certain attraction for many, including the poet and good friend of the gypsies, Mustafa Wabbi Tell, better known as Arar, who gives a beautiful picture of them:

No greed and no keenness between the tents

and no care for a fils or a dinar  
all gypsies are equal  
that wipes the differences  
between two neighbours.

Historically, gypsies moved from one place to another with their tents, searching for peace and food, leading a harsh, unstable life where men depended on women to provide money for their families, through begging, dancing and reading fortunes.

Selling women, according to historians, was the worst habit in gypsy society. Bored husbands used to sell their wives, with the option of buying her back for double the price. Such cultural idiosyncrasies had a price, and to this day people still look down upon them.

"People still think that we are the lowest of people," the 25-year-old Youssi, who is working with

his father at their small grocery shop, said.

"People see us as garbage collectors and beggars, but we are not," he said pointing at himself.

Although a great number of gypsies work at the Amman Municipality, some have been able to strike out on their own.

"I am a mechanic, and there is nothing I don't know about cars," Mohammed said after taking a Coca Cola from the shop.

"I learnt about cars from a mechanic who taught me everything, and now I am trying to open my own shop," he continued proudly.

He is in the right line of work as driving in Wadi Marbat can be quite an experience.

There are rocks spread like mines along the street, which put your driving ability under serious examination.

Furthermore, the street doubles as a football field.



'I want to play all the time, and I hate school!' Some of the kids preparing themselves for the World Cup team photo (photo Roufan Nahhas)

No greed and no keenness between the tents

An unavoidable encounter with a great number of kids of all ages playing football brings progress to a standstill, as, totally unimpressed with the presence of the car, they continue unaffected their own little version of the World Cup.

"They have nowhere to go, no playing grounds, so the streets become their life," Umm Nasser explained.

The originality of the place takes you back in time as you still see kids riding donkeys and wandering in the street half naked.

Anas, a 6-year-old kid who, when asked about his age said: "I am eleven", is like many of the kids who roam the streets kicking a can of Pepsi.

"I want to play all the time," he said wiping his running nose with his hand, "and I hate school," he added.

Anas is one of many drop-outs who are spending most of their time in the streets.

"Lack of parental guidance and care can lead the kids to leave school, ignorance and perhaps a life of misery," Youssi said, as he watched the group of kids playing football beside his shop.

Youssi, a young ambitious man, plans to move from the area and find a girl to marry.

"When the time comes I want to find another place to live in and then get married; it is impossible to stay here," he said.

Marriage in this small society has its story too.

"Kidnapping [Al Khatfeh]: where a man kidnaps a woman in order to force her family's blessings] existed in our society in the old days. A guy sees a girl and they run away until they have her parents' approval," Umm Nasser recalls.

"But now this custom has died out along with our traditional colourful dresses and earnings," she added.

Gypsies all around the globe are distinguished by their colourful dresses, jewellery, vivid dances and haunting music.

"I still keep a dress with its beautiful bright colours in a safe place. It reminds me of the old days," Umm Nasser said.

"But these days we are becoming more modern and wear only the most expensive dresses," she laughs lifting her torn black dress.



Umm Nasser in her three-bedroom house which holds fourteen people (photo Roufan Nahhas)

There is also a dark side to life in this forgotten area.

"Although we are a small society, we still hear of crimes and problems which can make our lives insecure," Youssi said.

"A man killed another for a wristwatch, and two families fought because two kids engaged in a fight with each other while playing," he said.

"Kids can be a major headache for the families in this area. Many troubles between grown ups are caused by little kids who play and fight," Abu Khaled, who lives near the area, said.

"That is why I tell my kids to stay home and not to play in the street," he continued.

Officials of the Amman Municipality estimate the number of gypsies in Wadi Marbat at around 2000-2500, but nothing could be confirmed about the exact number nationwide. This is partly because many of the gypsies have built their houses without licence.

"The area here is full of people who own houses illegally and this might bring problems in the future for all of us," Youssi said.

## Gas masked troops add urgency to opposition movement in Iraq

By Patrick Cockburn

IRAQI PRESIDENT Saddam Hussein, is deploying troops wearing gas masks and special white uniforms, designed to protect them against chemical weapons, around Najaf, a city at the centre of opposition to his leadership.

The appearance of soldiers equipped against chemical warfare has caused terror in Najaf, where there are well-founded fears that the government is prepared to use poison gas against them if there is any sign of an uprising. A traveller who left Najaf recently said: "Everybody was so frightened when they saw the chemical warfare suits that they locked themselves in their houses. The streets were empty."

Iraq has used chemical weapons against domestic opponents in the past. In

1988, Iraqi artillery and aircraft used munitions filled with the nerve gases sarin and tabun against the Kurdish town of Halabja, killing 5,000 people.

Iraqi troops equipped with tanks and multiple rocket launchers have sealed off Najaf since February 19, when Ayatollah Mohammed Saeed Al Sadr, a popular leader of the Shia Muslims, who are a majority in Iraq, was shot dead in an ambush with his two sons. He is widely believed in Iraq to be the latest victim of government death squads, who are alleged to have killed four senior members of the Shia clergy in the past five years.

The Iraqi government is aware that any sign that it is about to use poison gas — such as troops wearing chemical warfare suits — provokes terror among Iraqis. In 1991, Iraqi helicopters dropped flour,

which looks like a cloud of gas, on the Kurds, in response to their uprising, to speed up their flight to Turkey and Iran.

Opponents of the Baghdad regime living in exile say that President Hussein has chosen this moment to increase repression against the Shia because he knows international attention is focused on Kosovo, Yusuf Al Khirie, a member of a Shia charitable organisation in London, says: "I have seen nothing as bad as this since the uprising after the Gulf War [in 1991]. There are many arrests and executions. Saddam knows the attention of the world is focused elsewhere." The Shia make up 55 per cent of the Iraqi population but are excluded from power.

Hussein appears to consider the Shia's religious leaders, most of whom live in the holy cities of Najaf, Kufah and Karbala on the Euphrates, as being the most dangerous potential rebels to his rule.

Ayatollah Sadr built up a religious organisation throughout southern Iraq and in Baghdad. Before his murder he appointed community judges and prayer leaders, many of whom have now been arrested.

Iraqi security has such a tight grip on Najaf and the other holy cities that it is unlikely anybody other than government death squads could have carried out the assassinations of Sadr and the other senior clerics.

An Iraqi who left Najaf 10 days ago says the government's claim to have caught and executed the killers "is only good for Iraqi propaganda outside Iraq. Nobody believes it at home." The Baghdad government has, however, taken advantage of the assassinations by using them as an excuse to place surviving Shia

leaders under virtual house arrest, ostensibly for their own protection. Armed Iraqi security men now prevent visitors from seeing the Grand Ayatollah, Ali Sistani.

Meanwhile, the U.S. and British governments are seeking to remodel the Iraqi opposition at a two-day meeting at a hotel in Windsor, Berkshire, which started yesterday. The meeting is of the Iraqi National Congress (INC), the deeply divided umbrella organisation of the opposition, and is to set a date for its general assembly, possibly later in the month.

Hoshyar Zibari, a leader of the powerful Kurdistan Democratic Party, which belongs to the INC, says the aim is to choose a new leadership.

The White House, U.S. State Department and the CIA are eager to remove

control of the INC from its leader, Ahmad Chalabi, who has strong support in the U.S. Congress.

Chalabi advocates a guerrilla war using promised U.S. equipment in the hope of provoking mutinies within the army. Zibari said he sees the future of the INC as a political organisation and not as a military movement.

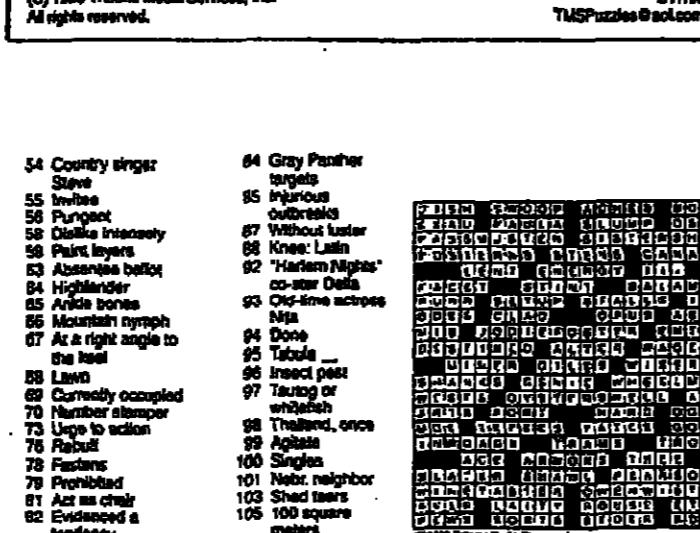
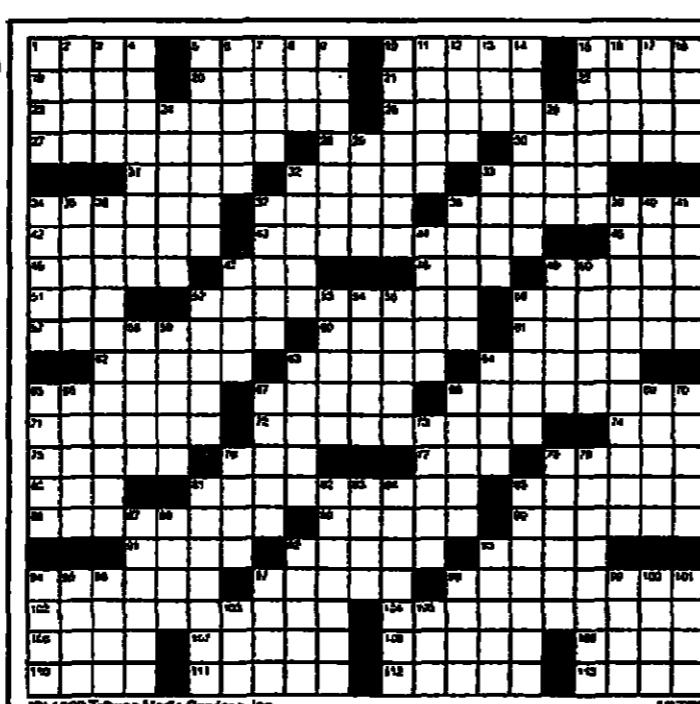
The Kurdish parties are unlikely to agree to the INC operating from Kurdistan, the only part of Iraq outside the control of Saddam Hussein, unless they receive cast-iron assurances from the U.S. that it will protect them in the event of an Iraqi counter-attack. Kurdish misgivings about U.S. air support have been compounded by its failure to prevent Serbia expelling the Kosovars.

— The Independent

## The Saturday Crossword

### GET BEAT

By Xan Lattimore, Rosemont, Pennsylvania



## Grey wolves stalk Turkish politics

By Steve Bryant

Reuters

A LONE grey wolf howls at the sky from a crag on a bleak mountainside.

A policeman carries his pistol with the three-crescent standard of Turkish nationalism embossed on the base of the handle in mother-of-pearl.

A mob of furious men surround a Kurdish party office chanting "martyrs never die," their hands raised to form symbolic wolf heads. Right-wing gunmen pump six bullets into the belly of a human rights activist alleged to be supporting Kurd rebels.

The far-right, redolent with its powerful imagery, is no fringe embarrassment in Turkey. It is a pervasive and sometimes violent force that has shaped national politics.

The party at the heart of the movement seems well placed to win parliamentary seats in April 18 elections.

The charismatic founder of the Nationalist Action Party (MHP) may have died in 1997, but loyal followers know his vision of a homogeneous Turkish community stretching from the Balkans to the Great Wall of China has entered the national consciousness.

In the Turkish capital Ankara, a stream of respectable couples and young men stroll up a hillside to pay respect at the tomb of nationalist "ba-bug" or chieftain, Alparslan Turkes.

Turkes was the inspiration for "grey wolf" right-wing gangs whose street fights with leftists in the 1970s cost 5,000 lives and provoked a military coup.

State institutions were purged of leftists over three years of army rule, while the right quietly reassessed its influence.

A battered satchel containing the Muslim holy book swings from the headstone of the plain marble tomb.

"The inscription reads 'Alparslan Turkes, date of birth: 1917.' There is no date of death, since he was immortal," says Senol Dogan, a cheery devotee who keeps a vigil by the tomb and sells nationalist badges and banners from a nearby hut.

"Turkey for the Turks," reads one

poster, a grim message to armed rebels seeking self-rule in the mainly-Kurdish southeast.

"As you know there are some traitors in this country who want to divide the motherland. This is our warning to them that we will not give up," says Dogan.

Lurid pictures of wolves abound on his stall. Nationalism is steeped in a mythology that says a she-wolf called Asena led Turks out of central Asia in the mists of pre-history.

And the MHP is convinced it will escape from the political wasteland after the April elections.

Fed by Kurdish rebel conflict in 1995 polls the party drew just over eight per cent, short of the 10 per cent needed to qualify for seats in parliament.

"This year we will win 17 or 18 per cent," Dogan says.

But analysts argue a decrease in the intensity of the conflict with Kurdish rebels has reduced the force that drove much of the rise in Turkish nationalism. Fighting, which has cost more than 29,000 lives in 14 years, peaked in the early 1990s.

"I am one of those who say they will not beat the barrier," said Ismet Berkman of Liberal Radikal newspaper. "In the past the conflict in the southeast was fiercer, the atmosphere that the MHP is based on — that culture of martyrs — was more powerful and they had Alparslan Turkes as their leader.

"Even then they could not beat the barrier." But at party headquarters, its walls decked with pictures of the "chieftain" and his less inspirational successor Devlet Bahceli, the mood is more confident.

"There will be no problem with the threshold for the MHP. We believe the political situation favours us," says Koray Aydin, general secretary and a candidate for parliament in Ankara.

Certainly a newly assertive foreign policy that forced climb-downs from Syria, Greece and Greek Cyprus is playing the MHP's tune. And the capture in February of Kurdish guerrilla leader Abdullah Ocalan was celebrated as a national victory.

Prime Minister Bülent Ecevit has won much of the credit for the capture of Ocalan and his blend of leftism and nationalism could eat into MHP support.

"After the arrest of Abdullah Ocalan, the MHP is finding that a lot of the undecideds they might have hoped to attract have been taken by Ecevit," says Kemal Can, author of a book on the far-right in Turkey.

"I think the MHP is in a position from which it will be hard to beat the threshold. It is on a critical boundary," Can said.

In or out of parliament, few have any doubts of the MHP's success in polarising nationalist thought and preventing any wavering in Turkish support for "ethnic brothers" in Cyprus, divided since 1974 into Turkish and Greek sectors.

Turks hold similar feelings of kinship towards Albanians in Kosovo and a small Turkish minority there.

"Its ideas are still powerful. Throughout the 1990s there was a general shift to the right, to nationalism in Turkish politics... The MHP perhaps still carries a symbolic role as the bearer of this nationalism but all parties have internalised what it said," Can said.

The party says it has "idealists" — its description of committed nationalists — at every level of society.

"The MHP is a party of members. We have professors in universities, judges and prosecutors in the courts, doctors in the hospitals, teachers in schools," Aydin said.

Support for the far-right is also strong among members of security forces and the ranks of the interior ministry.

Aydin says the party's success lies in its deep roots and ideology.

"The MHP rests on decades of thought and writing and theory. A newcomer to nationalism such as Ecevit has nothing to teach us or say to us," he said.

Failure to win parliamentary elections will not be disaster for the MHP. Most of its ideas have been assimilated into other parties and it will work to ensure things stay that way.

"Come back and have a cup of tea sometime" said Dogan beside the chieftain's tomb. "I am always here."

## Lebanon adopts austerity budget

BEIRUT (AFP) — The Lebanese government has approved an austerity budget for 1999 with a whopping 40.2 per cent deficit, down from 42 per cent in 1998, officials said on Thursday.

Revenue in the budget which still needs parliamentary approval has been set at 4,990 billion Lebanese pounds (\$3.3 billion) — up 902 billion pounds (around \$600 million) over 1998.

Spending forecasts have risen to 8,360 billion Lebanese pounds (\$5.54 billion) up 1,040 billion pounds (around \$700 million) over 1998, despite the cabinet's announced intentions to tighten the economy's belt with greater fiscal pressure.

The extra spending will cover debt-servicing and a new public sector salary scale introduced by the previous prime minister, billionaire entrepreneur Rafik Hariri.

Lebanon is groaning under \$18.6 billion of debt, most of which was amassed under the programme to rebuild Beirut after the 15-year civil war.

The government reduced the deficit by raising a number of taxes.

"We had no choice but to take certain unpopular measures," said Information Minister and government spokesman Anwar Al Khalil after the revenue figures were set at a cabinet session Wednesday evening.

In February, Prime Minister Selim Hoss tried to reassure foreign investors that the

government had no intention of changing companies' income tax.

Meanwhile, the government hiked the price of 20 litres of petrol by \$1.30 and increased the cost of mobile telephone communications by 40 per cent.

The government also raised tax on imported cigarettes and alcohol, as well as the cost of residence and work permits for foreigners, except Syrians.

Land tax was also up significantly while service and landing fees for foreign airline companies at Beirut airport were hiked by 50 per cent.

"It's the best we can do and I'm optimistic that the recession will end soon," Hoss told Al Nahar newspaper Thursday.

The Hoss government plans to reduce the budget deficit within five years to less than five per cent of gross national product (GNP) from 15 per cent in 1998, and the debt to 80 per cent of GNP, against the current 113 per cent.

Petrol price rises in particular received an angry reception from the unions.

"We've always said that touching the price of petrol is politically explosive," said Elias Abu Rizk, head of the 200,000 member CGTL union, who called an emergency meeting to discuss ways to protest the budget.

"We reject all tax rises and will oppose them by all legal means," he told several radio stations Thursday morning.

## Planning report delineates uses, sources of financial aid to Jordan

AMMAN (Petra) — A recent Ministry of Planning report said the largest proportion of the JD7.7 million financial aid from donor countries was allocated to water projects where the share of the water sector sharply edged up to 54 per cent in 1998 compared to 17 per cent in 1994.

The report added that the aid directed to reduce poverty and improve economic opportunities has replaced the traditional development projects such as energy and transporta-

tion. However, the report pointed out that health projects still get 16 per cent of the total official donations.

According to the report, there are two kinds of development aid; loans, which amounted to \$419.4 million, and grants, which totalled \$287.6 million.

The Arab Fund for the Economic and Social Development was the major donor in 1998 as it provided 60 per cent of total aid, followed by the Islamic Development Bank, which supplied 21

per cent. The European Investment Bank and finally the World Bank accounted for five and nine per cent respectively.

Bilateral aid, constituted 47 per cent of total aid granted to Jordan 79 per cent of which were grants, and 21 per cent loans.

In bilateral aid, the U.S. Agency for International Development was the largest donor as it provided 40 per cent of total donations to the Kingdom, followed by Germany, 28 per cent and Japan, 26 per cent.

## ECB rate cut puts pressure on euro-zone governments

FRANKFURT (AFP) — The unexpected decision by the ECB to cut its key rate by half a point will support the ailing euro-zone economy and enables monetary officials to increase pressure on national governments to reform their economies, observers here said on Friday.

The European Central Bank (ECB) surprised the financial markets on Thursday by lowering its key refinancing ("refi") rate to 2.50 per cent from 3.00 per cent, a much steeper cut than had been expected.

At the same time, the central bank's president, Wim Duisenberg, gave a very clear signal that in slashing its key rates, the ECB was firing all its shots at once and no further cuts could be expected in the future.

"We wanted the move to be as convincing as possible because we were afraid that a small step would encourage expectations that another would follow and that this was just a first step," Duisenberg told journalists at a news conference held to explain the move.

But "now you can be sure. This is it," he added.

That viewpoint was shared on Friday by the head of France's central bank, Jean-Claude Trichet, who also sits on the ECB's policy-setting governing council.

"It is a very significant reduction ... we are ending a cycle of a considerable lowering of (interest) rates in Europe," Trichet told Europe 1 radio.

"With this reduction, we will have lowered our short-term interest rates in the euro zone by a total of 1.5 percentage points" since the middle of last year to reach "the lowest level since the World War II," he added.

Europe's stock markets certainly seemed to appreciate the gesture by the ECB, which took responsibility for setting interest rates in the 11 countries participating in the single currency on Jan. 1.

European share prices powered ahead early on Friday. London's FT-SE 100 index of leading shares surged to a new record; the DAX index of 30 German blue chip shares added more than one per cent and in Paris, the CAC 40 index moved 1.60 per cent higher.

The cut was also welcomed elsewhere. The influential financial daily Boersen-Zeitung said in its leader column that the move was "correct but overdue."

"Small steps downwards would have been seen as confirmation that the situation was bad, without being very effective," the newspaper said. "They would possibly have destroyed confidence rather than created it."

BNP economist Emmanuel Ferry agreed.

"In our view, the cut was the right response to the worsening economic diagnosis. Actually, the ECB's decision will help its credibility," Ferry said.

It will "rebalance the Euro-

pean policy mix in a more supportive way ... a more proactive monetary policy is one of the main instruments to support domestic demand," the economist added.

The association of German savings banks described the cut as "economically appropriate."

And the federation of people's banks and rural credit cooperatives, BVR, described it as "tenable" in view of the anticipated slowdown in the euro-zone economy.

But in the favourable monetary environment, it was now up to the politicians to play their part and overcome the current economic weakness in Germany, the BVR said.

A similar point was made by ECB chief Duisenberg on Thursday.

"Those responsible for other policy areas are urged now even more to take the necessary steps to improve longer-term growth prospects for the euro area through strictly and decisively adhering to the aims of the stability and growth pact and through convincing structural reforms in the economy," he urged.

For the Boersen-Zeitung, the rate cut was a clever and successful piece of strategic manoeuvring.

"The ECB will now be able to claim, and rightly so, that it has done its part," the newspaper said. "That will enable it to exert even greater pressure on the politicians. Politicians will not be able to hide their own failure and shirk their own responsibility by making recommendations regarding monetary policy."

"For that, the governing council, which has only been carrying the burden of monetary policy for 100 days, has to be congratulated," the newspaper concluded.

Thursday, 08-04-99										ACCESS 44/49/98
Exchange Rates										
US DOLLAR	1,000	0.1888	0.1827	0.1877	1.8587	0.1945	2.3002	0.2077	0.7086	
EUROPEAN	1,000	1.0000	1.0269	0.9876	0.7411	1.0002	1.1858	1.0000	1.0761	1.0442
YEMENI RIAL	5,1951	0.9785	1,0000	0.9441	0.5416	1,0001	0.9782	0.1026	0.1150	0.2771
YEMENI POUND	0.5235	0.1026	1,0000	0.9782	0.1026	1,0000	0.9782	0.1026	0.1026	0.2771
YEMENI RIAL	0.5235	0.1026	1,0000	0.9782	0.1026	1,0000	0.9782	0.1026	0.1026	0.2771
YEMENI POUND	0.5235	0.1026	1,0000	0.9782	0.1026	1,0000	0.9782	0.1026	0.1026	0.2771
YEMENI RIAL	0.5235	0.1026	1,0000	0.9782	0.1026	1,0000	0.9782	0.1026	0.1026	0.2771
YEMENI POUND	0.5235	0.1026	1,0000	0.9782	0.1026	1,0000	0.9782	0.1026	0.1026	0.2771
YEMENI RIAL	0.5235	0.1026	1,0000	0.9782	0.1026	1,0000	0.9782	0.1026	0.1026	0.2771
YEMENI POUND	0.5235	0.1026	1,0000	0.9782	0.1026	1,0000	0.9782	0.1026	0.1026	0.2771
YEMENI RIAL	0.5235	0.1026	1,0000	0.9782	0.1026	1,0000	0.9782	0.1026	0.1026	0.2771
YEMENI POUND	0.5235	0.1026	1,0000	0.9782	0.1026	1,0000	0.9782	0.1026	0.1026	0.2771
YEMENI RIAL	0.5235	0.1026	1,0000	0.9782	0.1026	1,0000	0.9782	0.1026	0.1026	0.2771
YEMENI POUND	0.5235	0.1026	1,0000	0.9782	0.1026	1,0000	0.9782	0.1026	0.1026	0.2771
YEMENI RIAL	0.5235	0.1026	1,0000	0.9782	0.1026	1,0000	0.9782	0.1026	0.1026	0.2771
YEMENI POUND	0.5235	0.1026	1,0000	0.9782	0.1026	1,0000	0.9782	0.1026	0.1026	0.2771
YEMENI RIAL	0.5235	0.1026	1,0000	0.9782	0.1026	1,0000	0.9782	0.1026	0.1026	0.2771
YEMENI POUND	0.5235	0.1026	1,0000	0.9782	0.1026	1,0000	0.9782	0.1026	0.1026	0.2771
YEMENI RIAL	0.5235	0.1026	1,0000	0.9782	0.1026	1,0000	0.9782	0.1026	0.1026	0.2771
YEMENI POUND	0.5235	0.1026	1,0000	0.9782	0.1026	1,0000	0.9782	0.1026	0.1026	0.2771
YEMENI RIAL	0.5235	0.1026	1,0000	0.9782	0.1026	1,0000	0.9782	0.1026	0.1026	0.2771
YEMENI POUND	0.5235	0.1026	1,0000	0.9782	0.1026	1,0000	0.9782	0.1026	0.1026	0.2771
YEMENI RIAL	0.5235	0.1026	1,0000	0.9782	0.1026	1,0000	0.9782	0.1026	0.1026	0.2771
YEMENI POUND	0.5235	0.1026	1,0000	0.9782	0.1026	1,0000	0.9782	0.1026	0.1026	0.2771
YEMENI RIAL	0.5235	0.1026	1,0000	0.9782	0.1026	1,0000	0.9782	0.1026	0.1026	0.2771
YEMENI POUND	0.5235	0.1026	1,0000	0.9782	0.1026	1,0000	0.9782	0.1026	0.1026	0.2771
YEMENI RIAL	0.5235	0.1026	1,0000	0.9782	0.1026	1,0000	0.9782	0.1026	0.1026	0.2771
YEMENI POUND	0.5235	0.1026	1,0000	0.9782	0.1026	1,0000	0.9782	0.1026	0.1026	0.2771
YEMENI RIAL	0.5235	0.1026	1,0000	0.9782	0.1026	1,0000	0.9782	0.1026	0.1026	0.2771
YEMENI POUND	0.5235	0.1026	1,0000	0.9782	0.1026	1,0000	0.9782	0.1026	0.1026	0.2771

# Business & Finance

Jordan Times, Saturday, April 10, 1999 9

## Prices of shares drop at the stock exchange

By Tareq Ayyoub

AMMAN — The general price index at the Amman Stock Exchange (ASE) slipped at the end of the past week following a decline in the share prices of most of the firms that were traded in the bourse, the stock market's weekly bulletin showed Friday.

The bulletin indicated that the drop in the general price index was due to the remarkable decline in the prices of the blue-chips, especially the Arab Bank, the Kingdom's largest financial institution and the bourse's major blue-chip.

The bank's share price slipped from JD215 in the previous week to JD212.5, the lowest price it has registered in more than a month.

Among the other firms that recorded decline in their share prices were the Jordan Cement Factories, the Arab Potash Company and the Jordan Petroleum Refinery, the bulletin showed.

The ASE weekly bulletin showed that general price index closed at 178.59 points compared to 180.32 in the previous week, or 1.73 points.

The bulletin showed that turnover amounted to JD3.7 million compared to JD1.2 million in the previous week when trading lasted for two days following the 'Eid Al Adha holiday.

Out of the 60 firms that were traded on the floor, share prices of 34 companies dropped, while 19 registered increase while shares of seven others recorded no changes in their prices.

The bulletin showed that activities in the stock market focused on the Arab Bank, the pharmaceutical industry and the Jordan Steel Company.

The industrial sector's total turnover amounted to JD1.6 million, where Jordan Steel ranked first among the firms in this sector with a total turnover of JD375,606.

Jordan Phosphate Mines

came second with a turnover amounting to JD204,645 followed by the International Tobacco, JD191,041.

The Arab Pharmaceutical Manufacturing and Dar Al Dawa, the two major pharmaceutical firms in this field, won JD348,962, the bulletin showed.

The banking sector ranked second with a turnover of JD1.3 million, the bulk of which went to the Arab Bank, which won JD1.1 million despite the decrease in its share price.

The parallel market's turnover totalled JD924,404, where trading focused on the Century Investment Group and the Razi Pharmaceutical, where the two firms' turnover amounted to JD358,605.

The number of firms that were traded during the last week's activities totalled 23 of which only four registered increases in their prices compared to 13 firms that registered decline, the bulletin showed.

## Cars were primary motor for German exports in 1998

WIESBADEN, Germany — Germany's auto sector was the driving force behind

export growth last year, with some 18 per cent of export revenue generated from the export

of motor vehicles, the Federal Statistics Office has said.

Car makers in Germany exported vehicles worth a total

168.2 billion marks (86 billion euros, \$92 billion) in 1998, 13.0

per cent more than in 1997, the office said in a statement.

German exports as a whole increased by only 6.9 per cent to 94.97 billion marks.

The export of office and data-processing equipment also expanded sharply in 1998, rising by some 12.4 per cent to 24.5 billion marks.

But the most important categories of exports were engineering products, which rose by 4.8 per cent to 147.9 billion marks; electro-technical products, which increased by 3.4 per cent to 121.3 billion marks; and chemical products, which were up 2.3 per cent at 120.8 billion marks.

The four main categories — motor vehicles, engineering, electro-technical products and chemicals — accounted for nearly 59 per cent of total German exports in 1998, the office said.

The same sectors also provided the main impulses for import growth, accounting for nearly 38 per cent of total imports.

Imports of electro-technical products increased by 7.8 per cent to 96.5 billion marks; motor vehicle imports expanded by 9.7 per cent to 80.8 billion marks; imports of chemical products were up 6.6 per cent at 73.3 billion marks; and imports of machinery and equipment grew by 8.7 per cent to 57.6 billion marks.

CANCER: (March 21 to April 19) Your friends will be impressed to hear what you've been up to lately, and will look at you with new respect, as well they should. That's the good part. The bad part is that they could talk you into being their leader. This happens when you speak up. People ask you to take on more responsibility. Have a great time while you're at it.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) You could get into a pretty good argument today with an older person, but here's a little bit of forewarning. Looks like the other guy has you outflanked when it comes to the facts. You may not be able to win with reason or logic, but you can probably win through love. That's your secret weapon.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Don't let worries about work to be done keep you from taking a fantastic excursion. Not only will you see things you've never seen before, but you could learn a lot, especially if you take along the right companion. Today, that's somebody who knows more than you do. If you find such a person, thoroughly enjoy the learning experience.

CANCER: (June 22 to July 22) This is a good day to review your resources. Figure out how much you've got, and how you want it allocated. If you have a few of these decisions made now, you won't have to worry about them when the action starts getting fast and furious again. Besides, you may be pleasantly surprised.

LEO: (July 23 to August 22) You and your mate could be committed to each other, but that doesn't mean you always agree. Today is a good example. It's hard for you to give up control, even to someone you love a lot. Today, it might work. Keep pushing, until the other person comes up with the winning idea.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) This is a good day to take on a complicated technical project. Go ahead and read the manual, and figure out how its supposed to be done. It's a challenge now, but the result of your effort could be that your life's a lot easier. Go for it.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) It really seems like you should be able to go full speed ahead today. There are hidden dangers lurking, of which you should be aware. It would be easy to overspend, for example. Be thrifty early, so you have something left to splurge with later.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) There could be some big changes going on at your place this weekend. If so, you need to be careful. Don't put in something you'll have to change later. Think it all the way first, so when you do it, its done right and you can trust it to stay there. In other words, build it to last.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) If you have a friend with a chip on his or her shoulder today, watch out. Reason is not going to work with this person. Logic will fall flat, too. Don't bend the rules, though. That would just make matters worse.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 19) This is a good day to count your pennies and figure out how you're going to spend them. While you're at it, you may even think of a way to make more, or to save on the expenditures you had planned. Try not to spend recklessly, even if you see something you like. With just a little planning, you can get lots more for lots less.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 18) You've got a pretty good scan on what's happening, and what you don't know, you can figure out. That's why you're most likely to be chosen the leader for today's activities. Don't worry for a minute. You'll come up with something brilliant, as usual.

PISCES: (February 19 to March 20) It almost seems like a good day to travel, but it isn't, really. You'd be better off if you invited your date to stay home with you instead. Looks like there will be delays out there, and possibly even mechanical breakdowns. So, if you're going for a drive, better check the oil first.

Birthstone of April: Diamond — Amethyst

## Japanese firms finally begin painful restructuring

TOKYO (AFP) — When 58-year-old Masaharu Nonaka committed suicide in front of his company president rather than take early retirement, it was a sign of the dramatic restructuring taking hold of Japanese firms.

A string of bluechip companies in the world's second largest economy have pledged in past weeks to turn their businesses around, with job cuts and rationalisations.

Nonaka's death at tyre-maker Bridgestone Corp. is also evidence of the huge resistance to staff cuts in a country where the job-for-life culture has been entrenched since the end of World War II. That has left many firms

reluctant to carry out full-scale restructuring, with most job losses coming through attrition and early retirement, rather than redundancies.

After 33 years with Bridgestone, Nonaka was firmed out to a sports subsidiary and made to take early retirement as the firm restructured.

"I will resist the cruel restructuring the company is now doing by utilising the restructuring boom of other companies," he wrote in a letter to his boss before his death two weeks ago.

But it is in part thanks to this restructuring, begun several years earlier than many Japanese firms,

Bridgestone posted record profits last year.

Other firms are now following the lead of heavyweights such as Sony Corp. and Mitsubishi Electric Corp., which have announced broad restructuring programmes in the past month.

Sony, Japan's mighty electronics giant, said it would cut its 170,000-strong workforce by 10 per cent and close one fifth of its plants worldwide.

The reorganisation puts Sony's PlayStation game console and Internet-related businesses at the heart of its operations, pushing aside traditional television and stereo sales.

Mitsubishi Electric said last week it would cut 14,000 jobs, or 10 per cent of its workforce, and spin off loss-making operations.

Hitachi Ltd. said it would cut 6,500 staff and refocus on profitable businesses.

Together these announcements have pushed up the Tokyo stock market this year to become the best performing major index in the world.

But analysts note many of these pledges to reform fall far short of what is needed.

"The risk is that most firms

are still closely tied to the old ways and remain reluctant to change," said Ron Bevacqua, senior economist at Merrill Lynch in Tokyo.

The market has focused on a few substantive restructuring announcements and other Japanese firms seem to have discovered the positive impact that restructuring announcements have on their share price, even if the contents of the plan are not as bold as those which have captured the headlines," he added.

Weak firms are still being supported by their larger rivals and capacity is not being

reduced, he noted. A shakeup of the lifetime employment system needs to be led by political changes and a new emphasis on winning over customers, not by expanding market share.

"We remain pessimistic that the corporate sector as a whole is ready for such change," Bevacqua said.

Japanese business executives, however, think the future holds far more promise.

A group of 60 firms, including some foreign companies doing business here as well as giants like Sony and Toyota Motor Corp., have been running a series of full-page advertisements in major newspapers telling Japanese workers to stop criticising and start being more positive.

"All Japanese people have become like salarymen who complain all the time," read the advertisement.

## Crisis undermines one Russian bank in three — Gerashchenko

MOSCOW (AFP) — One Russian bank in three was driven to the wall by last year's financial crisis, but more than 1,000 banks are functioning without financial problems, Central Bank Chairman Viktor Gerashchenko has said.

More than seven months after the August crisis erupted beneath the entire banking system, the Central Bank finally gave its verdict on how the future sector would look.

"We can say that of 1,473 banks currently in existence, around 70 per cent are financially stable and are not experiencing any difficulties and can work without any government help," Gerashchenko said.

"The remaining 30 per cent, or 441 banks, are experiencing a shortage of liquidity and funds and, as we see it, are incapable of independently getting out of the situation," he added.

The vast majority of these

would not be worth saving he said, but 44 of the biggest problem banks would have to be helped as they were sitting on a considerable chunk of the asset base and deposits of the Russian banking system.

"Here we have a big problem because these 44 problem banks ... have 50 per cent of the assets of the banking system and 45 per cent of deposits of the people," Gerashchenko said.



Easter Sunday Lunch

11 April, 1999 at 1:00pm

Enjoy Easter lunch with us. Our Executive Chef Francois Dury will prepare a wide selection of hot and cold delicacies including:

Salmon Medallion

Fillet of Beef Wellington

Chicken Florida

Quails with White Grapes

Seafood Calypso

and much much more.

We are looking forward to celebrating Easter with you, your family and friends.

Price: JD 15++ per person

**Radisson SAS**

HOTEL AMMAN

The difference is genuine.

For reservations, please call the banqueting office at tel. 5607100

JORDAN MARKETPLACE \*\*\* JORDAN MARKETPLACE \*\*\* JORDAN MARKETPLACE

## A LOVE STORY OF STYLE

DAJANI JEWELLERS

Amra Forum Hotel  
Shops, Amman

Many villas and apartments for rent and sale

Furnished & Unfurnished

For more information call:

Abdoun Real Estate

5920605/5920609/07953007

Web Site is

www.abdoun.com.jo

STUDIO HAIG

Professional quality in

1 hour service

Develop your colour film

at our shop and get

\* JUMBO photo size

30% larger

\* Free enlargement

20 x 30 cm.

Shmeisani - Opposite

Grindlays Bank.

Phone: 5604042

Sweifich Tel: 822891

Your Address In Amman

CRYSTAL

Quality Serviced Suites

\* One & Two Bedrooms \* Fully

Equipped Kitchenettes \* Daily &

Long Stay \* Reasonable Rates

5th Circle

Tel: 5692672 - Fax: 5674551

c-mail: crystal@go.com.jo

FOR RENT

Deluxe Villas

and Apartments

**SANABEL**

Real Estate

# Kournikova stays hot, beats Davenport

AMELIA ISLAND, FLORIDA (AP) — Anna Kournikova looked over to her mother and flashed a big smile she rarely shows on the court. Indeed, this was a victory to get excited about.

The ninth-seeded Kournikova defeated No. 1 seed Lindsay Davenport of the United States 6-4, 6-1 on Thursday in the Bausch and Lomb championships, a victory that intensifies the hot streak that began for the Russian about a month ago.

"I was just happy with the win," she said. "When you beat No. 2 in the world, you should be happy." Combined with her appearance in the final of the Family Circle Cup last week, Kournikova has a chance to move up as many as 11 places in the rankings over a two-week span by winning a title here.

Either way, the world's 16th-ranked player has a big upset to add to her resume. Her last victory of this magnitude came against Switzerland's Martina Hingis last May in Berlin.

"This was important for me because I haven't beaten a top, top player in

some time," she said. "So, this is very good. It gives me a lot of confidence. I need this."

Her next match will be against No. 6 seed Patty Schnyder of Switzerland, a rematch of Kournikova's victory in the semifinals last week.

Schnyder defeated Argentina's Ines Gorrochategui 7-5, 6-2.

Elsewhere in the round of 16, No. 5 Amanda Coetzer of South Africa beat No. 14 Virginia Ruano Pascual of Spain 6-1, 7-5, and Romania's Roxandra Dragomir defeated No. 8 seed Barbara Schett of Austria 6-2, 6-2. Two days after beating American teen star Venus Williams, Canada's Sonya Jeyaseelan fell 6-4, 6-2 to Fabiola Zuluaga of Colombia.

In a late match, defending champion Mary Pierce of France, the fourth seed, overcame a spotty effort to beat No. 15 compatriot Nathalie Dechy 2-6, 6-4, 6-3.

Pierce faces a quarterfinal Thursday against No. 7 Conchita Martinez of Spain, who beat No. 10 Chanda Rubin of the United States 7-6 (8-6) 5-7, 6-2.

in a test of endurance that lasted 2 hours, 40 minutes. Martinez, who won this tournament in 1995, did a nice job changing paces from the baseline on the slow green clay that suits her game perfectly.

"All these players are playing unbelievably right now," Martinez said. "It's hard, but you have to be ready to be out on the court as long as it's going to last. You can never give up and you have to know it's going to be a long match."

No. 2 Monica Seles of the United States needed only 41 minutes to defeat Alexandra Fusai of France 6-0, 6-1. Seles has lost only five games in two matches, but still has concerns about her game, especially with her next stop the Fed Cup next week.

"I'm realistic, I have to raise my level of play," said Seles, who will play Coetzer in the quarterfinals. "I need to be more consistent. I'm missing balls left and right. I'm not used to that and it's frustrating."



Chelsea's Italian player-manager Gianluca Viali (L) is tackled by Real Mallorca defender Miquel Soler in the semi-final of the UEFA Cup Winners Cup at Stamford Bridge. The game ended in a 1-1 draw (Reuters photo)

## World Youth Championship England and Brazil struggling

LAGOS (AFP) — Brazil and England, two of the biggest names at the World Youth Championship, are struggling.

England were headed for an early exit after going down to a 1-0 defeat against Cameroon in their Group E match at Kanu on Thursday.

The English Under-20 team lost 1-0 to a 64th-minute goal from Gaspard Komol, his second of the championship.

In their opening match on

Monday, England lost 1-0 to the United States and currently stand bottom of their group, with no points and no goals scored.

Cameroon tops the group on six points, with the United States, who lost 3-1 to Japan on Thursday, level with the Japanese on three points.

Brazil, placed third in Group F after two matches, face a "difficult match" Sunday against Zambia if they are to go through to the

next round, their coach said.

Brazil lost their opening match of the three-week youth football tournament when they were defeated 2-0 on Monday by Spain, but they won 3-0 on Thursday against Honduras.

That win leaves them on three points, one point behind both Spain and Zambia in the group.

"We are going to have a difficult match against Zambia and in order to win we are going to have to play

hard," Joao Carlos da Silva Costa told reporters.

In the other Group F match on Thursday, Zambia and Spain drew 0-0.

In Group D, Mali beat Portugal 2-1 to top the group on six points while Uruguay defeated South Korea 1-0.

The top two teams from each group will go through to the second round of the championship along with the best two third-placed teams.

## Reynolds aiming for new records, gold in Seville

JOHANNESBURG (AFP) — World 400-metre record-holder Butch Reynolds is back on track for big time athletics, and success at the World Championships in Seville in August, is high on his priority list.

After arriving in Johannesburg on Thursday to prepare for Saturday's International track and field meeting between South

Africa, England and an International Select team, the 34-year-old athlete from Atlanta said he will remain competitive until after next year's Olympic Games in Sydney.

"No world record is safe," said the tall American, in response to questions relating to his world best of 43.29 seconds which was set at a Grand Prix meeting in

Zurich in 1988.

"Records are there to be broken. Michael Johnson is an extremely strong athlete and on the right day, he can take it. The same applies to fellow Americans Antonio Pettigrew, Jerome Young and Tyree Washington, and Britain's Iwan Thomas.

"When I set the record in Zurich, everything was right on the night. The best in the

world competed, but most importantly, the pace was fast right from the start."

Reynolds, who opened his 1999 outdoor campaign by clocking 45.13 seconds at a meeting in Florida in the United States a fortnight ago, also told reporters: "I need to work on my conditioning and the way I run the bend."

"My strength is in the way I run the straights. I believe that with guys like Johnson, Washington, Young and myself around, the USA can break their 4x400 metre world relay record of 2:54.20 set at last year's Goodwill Games in Uniondale, US, in Seville, Spain."

His main opposition at Saturday's meeting — to be staged at 1,400 metres above sea level at the Pliditch stadium — will come from South African runners in Jopie van Oudtshoorn and Adriaan Botha, who have respective summer season bests of 44.88 and 45.40.

The International Select line up for Saturday includes world 800 metre indoor recordholder Maria Mutola from Mozambique, and should provide more of a match for South Africa, compared to the England team.

England are minus its star

athletes such as world triple jump recordholder Jonathan Edwards, javelin throwers Steve Backley and Mick Hill, triple jumper Austin Hansen, and injured 800 metre runner Kelly Holmes.

Christmas and who are playing their first season in European competition, are now well-placed to progress against expensively-assembled Chelsea.

Chelsea lost possession in midfield and Yugoslav Veljko Paunovic slipped a near pass in for Dani, a target of English club Sheffield Wednesday, to beat first Leboeuf and then De Goey before clipping the ball into the net with 12 minutes left before half-time.

Chelsea, who haven't lost in 26 previous home European ties, responded with two long-range efforts by Jody Morris and a glancing header by Marcel Desailly, but went in at the break looking in need of a defeat in Europe.

Real Mallorca's fleet-footed Spanish international Dani had expertly put the Spaniards ahead after 31 minutes when he outpaced Frank Leboeuf and rounded Chelsea goalkeeper Ed De Goey before slotting home.

In Moscow, Croatian international striker Alen Boksic — playing for the first time in almost 12 months — scored the goal that salvaged a 1-1 draw for Lazio against Lokomotiv Moscow.

Georgian international Zaza Dzanshishi, who tops the competition scoring list with six goals, scored a well-taken solo goal in the 60th minute to put Lokomotiv in front before Boksic celebrated his return to top class football after a season-long absence through a knee injury with a 76th-minute equaliser.

Hector Raul Cuper's Mallorca team, who led the Spanish first division before

the second half.

France's Marcel Desailly said afterwards: "We will need patience. They will have to come out of their half and attack in the second leg and I think we will have many opportunities to score."

Both teams played cautiously in the opening 45 minutes in Moscow — probing for defensive frailties — but Dzanshishi broke the deadlock 15 minutes into the second half.

He ran through with only Lazio goalkeeper Luca Marchegiani to beat. The keeper forced Dzanshishi out wide to his left but failed to dispossess the striker, whose momentum meant he had to find goal from an acute angle.

Dzanshishi turned 360 degrees and shot acrobatically to find the net before falling to the ground and then celebrating with a somersault.

Boksic then came on for his first match since injuring his knee just before last year's World Cup, while Roberto Mancini replaced striker Marcelo Salas.

The substitutions by Lazio's Swedish coach Sven Goran Eriksson proved a masterstroke.

Yugoslav ace Mihajlovic crossed from the right and Mancini deftly flicked the ball on to Boksic, who powered the ball home with the outside of his right foot.

Eriksson said he was pleased with the result.

"A draw was the logical

result of a match between two strong opponents," he said.

"Lokomotiv turned out to be tough opposition."

Morocco and Tunisia can seal Nations Cup places

JOHANNESBURG (AFP) — Morocco and Tunisia will become the first qualifiers for the 2000 African Nations Cup if they win pool matches this weekend.

While Morocco should defeat Togo comfortably at home in Group 2, Tunisia visit a Ugandan team desperate for revenge following a six-goal Group 7 thrashing in Tunis.

Ranked No. 1 in Africa for more than one year, Morocco owe their success to the stability created by coach Henri Michel, who guided his native France to third place at the 1986 World Cup.

Defender Nouredine Naybet, midfield playmaker Mustapha Hadji and striker Salaheddine Bassir, who line up with Spanish club Deportivo La Coruna, form the spine of the team.

Tunisia boast the only 100 per cent record at the halfway stage of the qualifiers, having recovered speedily from a disappointing 1998 World Cup campaign in France.

Italian coach Francisco Scoglio has blended many old faces with some new while the return from injury of 1998 African Nations Cup star Hassan Gabsi has proved a timely bonus.

Mozambique will hope history repeats itself in a top-of-the-table Group 1 clash with Cameroon having triumphed 3-0 when the Indomitable Lions visited Maputo 16 years ago.

Cote d'Ivoire are seeking their fourth consecutive win over Congo in Abidjan while Mali must defeat Namibia in the other Group 3 match to retain any chance of overtaking the pacesetters.

Gabon defend a 28-year unbeaten home record in qualifiers against a South African team lacking goalkeeper Hans Vonk and striker Philemon Masinga due to European club commitments.

Burkina Faso will move within one point of the finals if they complete a Group 5 double over Burundi while Zambia should consolidate their leadership of Group 6 at home to struggling Kenya.

**\*\* HAPPY EASTER \*\* HAPPY EASTER \*\* HAPPY EASTER \*\***

## GALLERIA

www.cns.com.jo/Galleria

You've Got Mail

STEPMOM

TODAY AT

CINEMA TEL:463-4144 PHILADELPHIA '1'	CINEMA TEL:463-4144 PHILADELPHIA '2'	CINEMA TEL:5699238 PLAZA	CINEMA TEL:5677420 CONCORDE	CINEMA TEL:5934793 GALLERIA 1	CINEMA TEL:5934793 GALLERIA 2	Hisham Yunes Theatre TEL: 4625155
Tom Hanks & Edward Burns ... in <b>SAVING PRIVATE RYAN</b> Shows: 12:15, 3:15, 6:15, 9:15	Sophie Marceau ... in Leo Tolstoy's <b>ANNA KARENINA</b> Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30	Leonardo Di Caprio ... in <b>TITANIC</b> Shows: 12:15, 3:30, 6:45, 9:45	ALWAD MAHROUS BTA' AL WAZIR Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30 CONCORDE 2 KISS THE GIRLS Shows: 3:30, 5:30	ABDOUN www.cns.com.jo/Galleria Julia Roberts ... in <b>STEPMOM</b> Shows: 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:45 THE MAGIC SWORD Thursday and Friday mornings	ABDOUN www.cns.com.jo/Galleria Julia Roberts ... in <b>STEPMOM</b> Shows: 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:45 RUSH HOUR Shows: 5:00 p.m. only	<b>AL SALAM AL</b> Starting at 8:30 p.m.

Listings for films and showing times as received by cinemas and their advertising agencies.

# Sports

Morocco  
and  
Tunisia  
can seal  
Nations  
Cup place

## SPORTS IN BRIEF

### 'Schett is Austria's danger player'

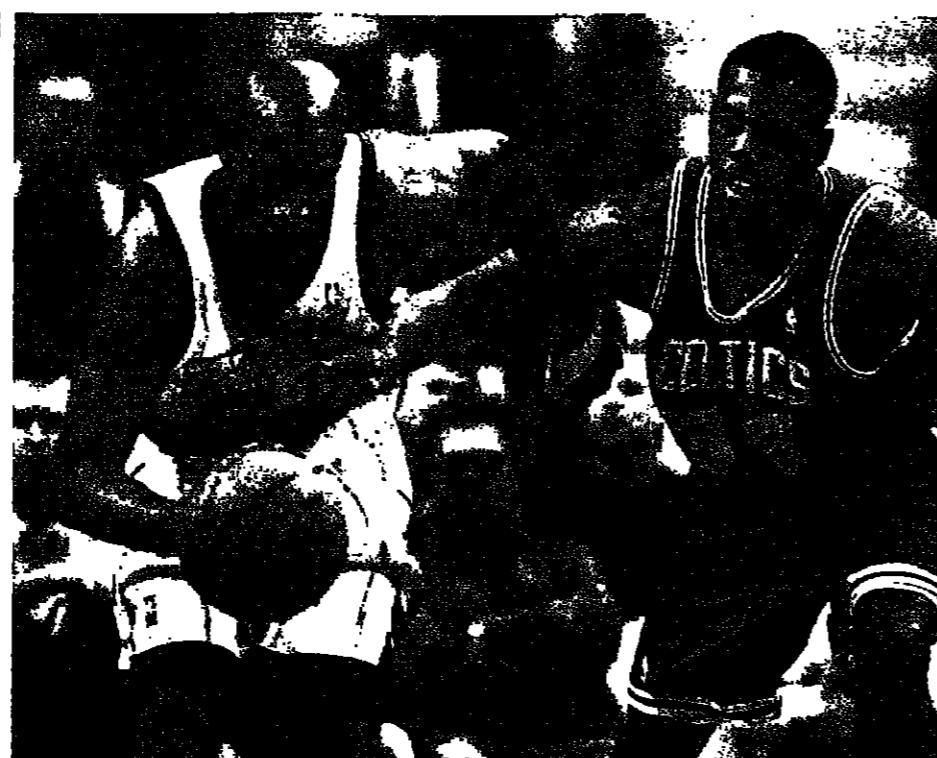
**SYDNEY** (AFP) — Barbara Schett will be the main threat to Australia when they meet Austria for the first tie in the Federation Cup, Australia's captain Lesley Bowrey said here on Friday. The Australian Tennis Federation has announced world No.19 Schett, along with Sylvia Plischke (39), Barbara Schwartz (121) and Patricia Wartusch (130) will take on the Australians in the World Group II first-round tie in Klagenfurt on April 17 and 18. The Australian challenge will be headed by veterans Nicole Pratt, ranked 78, and Renae Stubbs (196), backed by youngsters Alicia Molik (101) and Jelena Dokic (206). Bowrey said 23-year-old Schett, who so far this year has reached the fourth round of the Australian Open and the semi-finals in Auckland and Sydney, was the main threat to the Australian team. "Schett has been performing well this year but so have our girls," Bowrey said. "Jelena beat Arantxa Sanchez-Vicario and Sandrine Testud at the Hopman Cup, and Alicia upset Natasha Zvereva in Sydney." At stake is a spot in the elite 13-nation World Group of the revamped 2000 Fed Cup competition.

### Pakistan players held in Mexico

**MEXICO CITY** (AFP) — Mexican authorities on Thursday detained and prepared to deport nine Pakistanis, all members of a soccer club whose visas had expired, the National Migration Institute said. The Pakistanis, players and managers of a team that played in the Monterrey '99 Amateur Cup, were detained at Mexico City's airport as they prepared to board a plane to Tijuana, on the United States border. Their Mexican visas had expired on Tuesday. "The Pakistanis were trying to board a plane to Tijuana, most probably with the intention of jumping over to the other side and reaching the United States," the migration agency said. It said they would be deported later in the day.

### Baric takes over as Austrian coach

**VIENNA** (AFP) — Croatian Otto Baric has been named Austrian coach to replace Herbert Prohaska who quit following last month's Euro 2000 qualifier 9-0 hammering against Spain in Valencia. The 65-year-old is due to meet shortly with Austrian Football Federation President Beppo Maubart. He is expected to sign his contract next week. Baric, presently coach of Austrian first division side Lask Linz, is the first foreign coach of the Austrian team since Slovenia's Branko Elsner in 1987. The 9-0 defeat against Spain was Austria's most humiliating footballing moment since they went down 11-1 to England in 1908.



Toronto Raptors' Vince Carter (L) and Boston Celtics' Paul Pierce battle for the ball during first half NBA action in Toronto. Carter and Pierce are strong candidates for NBA rookie of the year honors (Reuters photo)

### Spurs beat Rockets in Houston

**HOUSTON** (R) — Tim Duncan had 18 points and 13 rebounds as the San Antonio Spurs used a balanced attack to defeat the Rockets 92-83 on Houston's homecourt Thursday, extending their winning streak to six games.

The Rockets came in with a nine-game home winning streak and could have moved past the Spurs into second place in the Midwest Division with another victory. But Duncan spearheaded the charge that saw all five Spurs starters score in double figures.

"We didn't have the fire we needed," said Rockets coach Rudy Tomjanovich. "I don't understand the lack of intensity."

They are a good team but I expected it to be more of a game than it was."

Sean Elliott scored 10 of his 19 points in the first quarter for San Antonio, which has won nine of its last 10 games and stayed within 1 1/2 games of first-place Utah in the Midwest.

"It was a war like we thought it would be," Spurs coach Gregg Popovich said. "These guys compete against each other really tough. We're just happy to come out of here with a win."

Heem Kelele had 27 points and 12 rebounds for Houston, which has lost twice at home to San Antonio this season. Star forward Scottie Pippen was limited to just four points in 34 minutes.

"Elliott guarded Pippen

most of the game and I think he did a really great job," Popovich said. "Nobody ever seems to notice how hard he works defensively."

In Seattle, Gary Payton scored 20 points and Detlef Schrempf added 17 as the SuperSonics rallied from a 15-point deficit to snap the Portland Trail Blazers four-game winning streak with an 87-86 victory.

Portland, which at 27-7 still has the best record in the NBA, failed to convert two chances to win at the end.

Following a steal by Rasheed Wallace, the Blazers had the ball with 16 seconds left. Jim Jackson threw a high pass in the lane to Wallace, who could not come down with it cleanly.

Following a scramble, the ball went off Wallace's foot and out of bounds with 1.5 seconds remaining.

"Portland got one last chance after Schrempf's inbounds pass went off John Croft's hands with two-tenths of a second left.

But Jackson's pass from mid-court could not be tipped towards the basket as time ran out.

In Toronto, Kenny Anderson, who was traded to the Raptors last season but refused to report, had 23 points and seven assists to lead the Boston Celtics past the Raptors, 101-89.

Anderson was booed throughout the game.

"That makes me feel really important," Anderson said.

"When I was here I didn't

think anyone knew who Kenny Anderson was. It's nothing against Toronto. I just didn't want to be in another country."

Antoine Walker contributed 18 points and 10 rebounds and Ron Mercer scored 14 points for Boston.

In Cleveland, Penny Hardaway scored 23 points and the Orlando Magic notched their season-high fifth straight win by allowing just five baskets over the final 21-plus minutes of a 73-69 victory over the Cavaliers.

Shawn Kemp collected 17 points and nine rebounds for Cleveland (17-17), which fell one game behind Philadelphia and Toronto in the race for the final two eastern conference playoff berths. The Cavs were playing their third game in three nights.

At Utah, Karl Malone scored a season-high 38 points and the Jazz turned it on down the stretch for a 92-85 victory over the Golden State Warriors.

In Los Angeles, Maurice Taylor scored 20 points and the Clippers used a big third quarter to snap a six-game losing streak with a 99-91 victory over the Minnesota Timberwolves, defeating them for the second time this season.

## Krajicek dumped out in Hong Kong quarters

**HONG KONG** (AFP) — World No. 4 and top seed Richard Krajicek of the Netherlands was bundled out in the quarter-finals of the \$350,000 Hong Kong Open here on Friday.

A lacklustre Krajicek was beaten by Germany's Hendrik Dreekmann 6-3, 3-6, 6-3.

Krajicek's departure sees the tournament robbed of its top two seeds. Second seed Patrick Rafter of Australia was knocked out in the first round.

Krajicek, winner of the Lipton Championships in Key Biscayne a fortnight ago, looked out of sorts and failed to come to terms with the tenacious style of the

German, ranked 96 in the world.

After coming back from a first set deficit, Krajicek failed to keep the momentum going when he was crucially broken early in the decisive third set.

Dreekmann, who knocked out Michael Chang in the second round, sped to a 5-3 lead and had Krajicek on the ropes at 15-40, but the Dutchman saved two match points and managed to serve out the game.

But the respite was short-lived with Dreekmann, scenting victory served his way to one of his biggest wins in his career.

"I don't know what I'm doing right ... I'm just win-

ning and I don't care," said Dreekmann.

He will now meet American Andre Agassi in the semi-finals.

Agassi turned on the power and style to breeze into the semi-finals with a straightforward 6-2, 6-2 victory over Germany's Nicolas Kiefer.

Agassi, who entered the tournament at the eleventh hour as a wild card, was in imperious form as he brushed aside Kiefer in exactly an hour.

The American World No. 12 and third seed broke Kiefer twice in each set to register his third straight-set victory of the tournament.

"I'm very pleased with the way I'm playing. It feels good to continue to this standard of play as the tournament goes on when the matches start to get tougher," said Agassi.

Kiefer, 21, had his chance in the sixth game of the second set when Agassi serving to take a 4-2 lead, trailed 0-40. But the youngster continued to make unforced errors to allow Agassi off the hook.

"Had he broken me at that stage, it could have turned into a battle. That was a crucial point and suddenly I was serving for the match," said Agassi.

## LOCAL SPORTS SCENE

### Jazireh to organise Hussein Basketball Tournament

**AMMAN** — Al Jazireh Club is currently preparing to hold Al Hussein Basketball Championship next February as a tribute to the late King Hussein who passed away Feb. 7. Lebanon's top clubs — Al Riyadi and Al Hikmah, as well as Alexandria's Ittihad and two teams from Greece and Syria are expected to take part in the event, to be hosted by Aramex, which sponsored Al Jazireh's basketball team. Al Jazireh were Jordan's First Division basketball champion in 1997.

### Pedestrian bridge to be built ahead of Games

**AMMAN** — The Greater Amman Municipality will construct a pedestrian bridge in the area located between the Royal Cultural Centre, the media centre of the 9th Pan-Arab Games — Al Hussein Tournament, and the Regency Hotel. Amman Mayor Nidal Hadid said a num-

ber of engineers will start setting up a feasibility study for the bridge, aiming at regulating the movement of more than 4,000 athletes, officials and media representatives, who will be staying in hotels in that area.

### Taekwondo federation sets agenda

**AMMAN** — The Jordan Taekwondo Federation (JTF) will soon to name its delegation, which will participate in the 14th International Championship for men and the 7th for women from June 2-6. During a recent meeting, chaired by Federation President Tahsin Shurdum, the JTF also decided to take part in the 3rd Vietnam International Championship from July 18-19, and to hold a training camp in Taiwan from July 19-Aug. 9. Meanwhile, the national taekwondo team left for Iran to participate in the 11th Tehran International Championship for men. During the competition, which comes as part of preparations for the 9th Pan-Arab Games, the team will play against Korea, Iran, Taiwan, Egypt, Morocco Turkey and other countries' teams.

## Sydney discovers unwanted Asian tourist

**SYDNEY** (AFP) — Australian health officials have ordered round-the-clock surveillance in Sydney port following the detection of the dreaded Asian tiger mosquito.

Officials say the insect, which can carry potentially deadly viruses such as yellow fever and dengue fever, was caught in a routine surveillance trap set by quarantine officers at Sydney's Port Botany.

It is not the first time Aedes Albopictus has been found in Australia, but it has never been identified further south than sub tropical Queensland.

The discovery is particularly worrying to New South Wales authorities in the middle of preparations to welcome tens of thousands of visitors here for the New Year's Eve Millennium celebrations and for the Olympics in September next year.

Sydney will be among the first major cities to see in the new Millennium.

Health and quarantine officials who held an emergency meeting here last week to discuss contingency control measures immediately

ordered an extensive programme of trapping and surveillance.

Insectical fumigation will begin if any more of the insects are found.

"We have been expecting to find it in Sydney eventually," an AQIS spokesman told AFP. "It is not uncommon in north Queensland, but it is further south than we are used to which naturally gets us interested."

"It is a mosquito which is a very successful coloniser and it has spread widely around the world so it is really inevitable that it would be detected here eventually. It is very aggressive in the reproductive sense."

New South Wales Health Department said Friday that in association with the AQIS it had instigated an enhanced surveillance system in and around Port Botany area following discovery of a single Asian tiger mosquito.

"This type of mosquito has previously been detected in tropical areas in Queensland and the Northern Territory," it said. "Early detection has assisted in stopping the species becoming established in these states."

## EASTER SUNRISE SERVICE AT MOUNT NEBO

Sunday 11 April 1999 at 6 a.m.  
The service (in English) is organised by the Anglican Jordan Chaplaincy  
Enquiries:  
465 6195 or 592 7292 or 551 4771  
**All are most welcome**

Bring a picnic breakfast for after the service!

## CAMPAIGN FOR AID TO THE KOSOVO ALBANIAN REFUGEES

The Young Muslim Women's Association (YMWA) in Jordan announces its campaign aimed at collecting donations and in-kind contributions to assist the Kosovo Albanian refugees.

The in-kind contributions are limited to blankets and clothing items of all sizes.

The Young Muslim Women's Association appeals to your generosity to support this campaign and its representatives will start receiving donations and contributions as of Wednesday, April 7th 1999 at the Princess Sarvath Community College (PSCC) between 8:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. daily. Receipts are provided for income tax exemption purposes. Packages should be labelled indicating kind and size of clothes.

**Princess Sarvath Community College**  
**Tel.: 5154605, 5159482, Fax: 5151293**

## Software Developers Wanted

### ZEINE Technological Applications

A leading Jordanian and an American multinational partner company are seeking (10) Software Developers with Windows experience to work in Amman - Jordan.

Only professional candidates with Good working knowledge of Windows API's and C/C++ are required.

### Experience:

- 8 positions requiring 2+ years of proven working experience
- 2 positions requiring 5+ years of proven working experience

### Skills:

- C++ Developers with API working knowledge and Windows Development
- C Developers on PC's or Apple Macintosh
- Excellent research capabilities

### Benefits:

- Very Good Salaries + 13 month Salary
- Allowances and other Benefits
- Health Insurance

Contact: Attention HRM (8)  
P.O.Box: 850652, Amman 11185 - Jordan, Fax (00962 6) 5167001  
E-mail: personnel@zeine.com.jo

## Army dissidents kill Niger president

NIAMEY (R) — Dissident soldiers ambushed Niger's President Ibrahim Baré Maïmouna at Niamey airport on Friday and the government said he had been killed.

Prime Minister Ibrahim Assane Mayaki announced Maïmouna's death in a broadcast on state radio but said only that he had been killed in an "unfortunate accident." Police and witnesses at the airport reported the ambush earlier.

"In the morning of Friday, an unfortunate accident resulted in the sudden death of the president of the republic," Mayaki said after hours of confusion in the capital.

He said Maïmouna's death came "at a particularly grave moment in the history of our country," a reference to growing political tension following chaotic local elections in February.

Mayaki went on to announce the dissolution of parliament and the suspension of political activity.

Although he said the present administration would continue in office until a national unity government took over, it was unclear who was really calling the shots.

Residents said calm reigned in the capital, with troops who earlier came out with tanks guarding the presidential palace, the airport and key ministries.

Witnesses and police sources at the airport said the ambush took place as Maïmouna was preparing to travel to the interior.

A correspondent for Radio France International reported from Niamey that body had been moved from the airport to a city clinic that residents said was owned by the president's wife.

Some members of the president's security staff were wounded critically in the attack, police and military sources said.

The airport was closed and officials said Air France had

cancelled a flight due to arrive later on Friday.

Earlier on Friday, troops with tanks moved into the streets, blocking access to the presidential palace and other key locations.

It was difficult to say if the assassination was part of a coup bid, and if so what had happened to the perpetrators.

Maïmouna, 49, a former army chief, ended Niger's first attempt at multi-party democracy with a coup in January 1996 that toppled an elected government.

Since winning a disputed presidential election in July of that year, Maïmouna had faced relentless pressure from a militant opposition spearheaded largely by leaders of the civilian government he overthrew.

His government has been grappling with a spate of public service strikes that have further paralysed the ailing economy of the debt-saddled Sahelian state.

Friday's events climaxed a

week of mounting political tension over the confused February elections.

The political temperature rose sharply on Thursday after an opposition call for resignation following a supreme court order for poll reruns in the majority of districts.

Vote counting in February was disrupted by violent attacks on poll centres as the opposition appeared in the lead.

Earlier on Friday and before death, state radio broadcast a government communiqué appealing for calm and vowing that authorities would deal with troublemakers.

"Court decisions are final and cannot be contested by either the government or the administration, the civilian population or the military," it said.

Telephone communications with the former French colony whose key neighbours are Nigeria and Algeria remained cut.



**BULLFIGHTER HURDLES A BULL:** A bullfighter jumps over a bull with a pole in a theatrical performance of the traditional 'Salto de la Garrocha' (Jump of the Garrocha) in the Seville convention centre on Friday. The show pays homage to the bulls used in traditional bullfights on the opening day of an international festival (Reuters photo)

## Israeli army shells planned site of camp for Lebanese expellees

RASHAYA (AFP) — Israel bombarded Friday a no-man's land in southern Lebanon following reports of plans to set up a camp there for Lebanese expelled from Israeli-occupied southern Lebanon, security sources said.

Israeli artillery fired rockets, tank cannon and heavy machine-guns at roads leading to the Marj Al Zouhour no-man's land, located in southeastern Lebanon and adjacent to the eastern sector of the border zone, they said.

An Israeli MR reconnaissance plane was also seen flying over the region earlier Friday, they said.

"It seems the Israelis have taken plans to establish a camp in Marj Al Zouhour very seriously and is flexing its muscles to show the Lebanese authorities that will not allow

such a camp," an official told AFP.

Lebanese authorities have hinted at plans to set up a camp that could accommodate up to 300 Lebanese expelled from southern Lebanon since Israel withdrew to the current line of control in 1985.

Many believe the camp would be a repeat of the Marj Al Zouhour makeshift tent camp where 417 Palestinians deported by Israel in 1992 remained stranded for a year before the Jewish state agreed to take them back.

Plans provided for the projected camp to be placed under the supervision of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).

Expulsions from the border zone have recently increased, despite repeated protests by the Lebanese authorities who

consider them violations of the Geneva conventions and the April 1996 truce accord between Israel and the Lebanese militant group Hezbollah which prohibits the harming of civilians.

Since Jan. 7, Israel has expelled about 50 residents of the town of Shebaa which had more than 40,000 residents before Israel's 1978 occupation of southern Lebanon but today counts just 3,000 inhabitants.

Most of those expelled by Israel were relatives of militiamen who deserted from its proxy South Lebanon Army (SLA) and crossed into the government-held zone.

European Union special envoy Miguel Angel Moratinos, after meeting with Lebanese President Emile Lahoud in Beirut on Thursday,

## U.N. Security Council members disappointed with Iraq rejection

UNITED NATIONS (AFP) — U.N. Security Council members expressed disappointment Friday with Iraq's rejection of U.N. panels set up to redraw U.N. strategy after December air strikes polarised the council.

In a report distributed here, Iraq charged that the panel on disarmament was "biased" and based on flawed premises as it reflected the views of panel members drawn from the U.N. Special Commission (UNSCOM), accused by Baghdad of spying for the Americans.

The Iraqi paper dismissed the recommendations of a second panel on the humanitarian situation saying that the Iraqi government would never accept the "trusteeship" of Iraq as proposed.

The report ignored the conclusions of the third panel, which said that Iraq had not fully complied with demands to repatriate prisoners and property seized during the 1990 Iraqi occupation of Kuwait.

Panel Chairman Celso Amorim of Brazil disputed Iraq's conclusions, saying that the panels were "solid, well-intentioned" and "a serious effort to find replies."

"I would hope that the Iraqis would at least keep their wait-and-see attitude," he said.

U.S. Ambassador Peter Burleigh, reacting to the Iraqi response, told reporters: "It was very unfortunate because the Iraqis seem to have basi-

cally rejected most of it out of hand, and the council is looking forward to Iraqi cooperation and compliance."

But British Ambassador Sir Jeremy Greenstock played down the response as he arrived for council discussions on the panel reports, saying: "I think we've got quite a long way to go in the discussion in the council."

"Why doesn't Iraq wait and see what comes out of it?" Russian Ambassador Sergei Lavrov noted that "it will be impossible to achieve a result without ensuring Iraqi cooperation, and this is very much on our mind."

"But it's very early to speculate. I am not saying that we are anywhere except making a first step," he added.

Non-permanent council members Bahrain, Canada and Slovenia joined the chorus of disappointment.

Bahrain Ambassador Jassim Buallay said, "Iraq is an important part in all this. The total rejection is disappointing."

"This is disturbing. The response is termed in very strong terms. I think inappropriately, and it doesn't help," said Ambassador Danilo Turk of Slovenia.

Canadian Ambassador Robert Fowler, who first proposed setting up the panels, said the Iraqi response was "an initial reaction."

He hoped that once the council had concluded its discussions, expected to last weeks, "the Iraqis might find



Car sex could lead to three years in jail

ROME (R) — In the movies, Kevin Costner and Sean Young did it in bed in Washington DC. Leonardo Di Caprio and Kate Winslet did it a vintage car below deck on the Titanic. But from now on, Italy's sex in the backseat could get you three years in jail. Italy's highest appellate court has quashed a 1997 law that imposed up to a couple caught making love in a car for engaging in an "indecent act." In its judgment late on Thursday, however, the court of cassation found that car sex constitutes the more serious crime of an "obscene act" which is punishable by up to three years in prison.

### Weird inventions get notice

LONDON (R) — Floating furniture, musical condoms and a do-it-yourself habitat kit have been put in the top ranks of the world's wackiest inventions. The gas-filled furniture was designed to float up to the ceiling when not in use, to give more space. The musical condoms burst into song when the right pressure was applied. The bid breath detector was a simple tube attached from mouth to nose. The science magazine Focus, which listed the gadgets, had checked through patent records to find which were the weirdest inventions ever concocted. Also among their quickie discoveries was the "Tootsie tube" for snug winter nights — a pipe which caught a person's breath and funnelled it down the bed to keep the toes warm.

### Netanyahu billed for missing forks

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AP) — It may have been a case of whodunit at the Georgian president's guest palace when Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his entourage spent the night and some of the silverware went missing. But there was no mystery about where to send the bill. President Edward Shevardnadze forwarded the Israeli leader a \$80 bill, along with an itemized list of 12 towels, two TV remote controls, one clothes brush, seven knives, nine forks and four fish forks noted as "broken or missing" when the Israeli delegation left Shevardnadze's guest house on March 23.

Calling the missing items "a matter of normal wear and tear," Netanyahu spokesman Avi Bushinsky said the Israeli government would pay the bill.

### Sailor find love letter from WWI

LONDON (R) — A fisherman has caught a British soldier's last message in a bottle to his wife, 85 years after it was thrown into the sea. Private Thomas Hughes wrote the message to his wife on the way to the trenches in France. Twelve days later he was dead. After netting the old bottle, fisherman Steve Gowen told Thursday's Sun tabloid: "It looked very old and when I wiped the grit and dirt off, I could see what appeared to be a note inside it." Bidding farewell to his wife, Hughes wrote: "To a sweet for the present — your hubby."

### France claims most surnames

PARIS (AP) — France has two families named Zorro and 44 Assessors but the last person to hold the surname of Hitler had it changed in 1946, says a book that claims the French have the world's largest number of names. "France has around a million different patronymics. It is both a world record and an evolving heritage — 200,000 names have disappeared in a century while 520,000 new surnames have appeared," writes Laurent Fordant in "The Atlas of Surnames in France." The book, based on data from the INSEE national statistics office, records for example that since 1891, 100 people were born with the name Genouille (Frog), some of whom changed it to the more aristocratic-sounding Du le Tang (literally From the Pond).

## Demonstration at site of Deir Yassin massacre

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AFP) — Dozens of Palestinians and Israeli Arabs demonstrated Friday on the west Jerusalem site where Israeli soldiers in 1948 massacred residents of the Arab village of Deir Yassin.

One hundred demonstrators came from Orient House, the Palestinian headquarters in Arab east Jerusalem, to Kfar Shaul, a religious Jewish neighbourhood now located on the site of Deir Yassin which was destroyed in the fighting which led to Israel's creation.

The demonstrators, who included a handful of Deir Yassin survivors, gathered at the graveyard below the few stone buildings which remain of the village and laid wreaths and set up gravestones at the site.

This place represents the beginning of our tragedy and is a symbol of it," Faisal Husseini, the PLO Executive Committee member in charge of the Jerusalem portfolio, told the crowd.

"We should guard this place and we must see that such

things do not happen again. What is happening today in Kosovo is a reminder to us of that fact," Husseini said.

The demonstrators, most of them women, were also accompanied by Mohammad Zuhdi Nasashibi, the finance minister in the Palestinian National Authority and, like Husseini, a descendant of a prominent Jewish family.

Israeli police and a large media presence escorted the marchers but there was no violence and no arrests.

The village, the remnants of which have been converted into a psychiatric hospital, was stormed April 10, 1948 by Israeli soldiers.

Also on Friday, about 150 Israelis protested Friday against Jewish settlement of Palestinian territory in the West Bank city of Hebron, a frequent flashpoint for Arab-Israeli confrontation, witnesses said.

"We will not allow Hebron to become another Kosovo," Mossi Raz, secretary general of the Peace Now group, told the crowd.

"We should guard this place and we must see that such

things do not happen again. What is happening today in Kosovo is a reminder to us of that fact," Husseini said.

The demonstrators, most of them women, were also accompanied by Mohammad Zuhdi Nasashibi, the finance minister in the Palestinian National Authority and, like Husseini, a descendant of a prominent Jewish family.

Israeli police and a large media presence escorted the marchers but there was no violence and no arrests.

The village, the remnants of which have been converted into a psychiatric hospital, was stormed April 10, 1948 by Israeli soldiers.

Also on Friday, about 150 Israelis protested Friday against Jewish settlement of Palestinian territory in the West Bank city of Hebron, a frequent flashpoint for Arab-Israeli confrontation, witnesses said.

"We will not allow Hebron to become another Kosovo," Mossi Raz, secretary general of the Peace Now group, told the crowd.

"We should guard this place and we must see that such

things do not happen again. What is happening today in Kosovo is a reminder to us of that fact," Husseini said.

The demonstrators, most of them women, were also accompanied by Mohammad Zuhdi Nasashibi, the finance minister in the Palestinian National Authority and, like Husseini, a descendant of a prominent Jewish family.

Israeli police and a large media presence escorted the marchers but there was no violence and no arrests.

The village, the remnants of which have been converted into a psychiatric hospital, was stormed April 10, 1948 by Israeli soldiers.

Also on Friday, about 150 Israelis protested Friday against Jewish settlement of Palestinian territory in the West Bank city of Hebron, a frequent flashpoint for Arab-Israeli confrontation, witnesses said.

"We will not allow Hebron to become another Kosovo," Mossi Raz, secretary general of the Peace Now group, told the crowd.

"We should guard this place and we must see that such

things do not happen again. What is happening today in Kosovo is a reminder to us of that fact," Husseini said.

The demonstrators, most of them women, were also accompanied by Mohammad Zuhdi Nasashibi, the finance minister in the Palestinian National Authority and, like Husseini, a descendant of a prominent Jewish family.

Israeli police and a large media presence escorted the marchers but there was no violence and no arrests.

The village, the remnants of which have been converted into a psychiatric hospital, was stormed April 10, 1948 by Israeli soldiers.

Also on Friday, about 150 Israelis protested Friday against Jewish settlement of Palestinian territory in the West Bank city of Hebron, a frequent flashpoint for Arab-Israeli confrontation, witnesses said.

"We will not allow Hebron to become another Kosovo," Mossi Raz, secretary general of the Peace Now group, told the crowd.

"We should guard this place and we must see that such

things do not happen again. What is happening today in Kosovo is a reminder to us of that fact," Husseini said.

The demonstrators, most of them women, were also accompanied by Mohammad Zuhdi Nasashibi, the finance minister in the Palestinian National Authority and, like Husseini, a descendant of a prominent Jewish family.

Israeli police and a large media presence escorted the marchers but there was no violence and no arrests.

The village, the remnants of which have been converted into a psychiatric hospital, was stormed April 10, 1948 by Israeli soldiers.

Also on Friday, about 150 Israelis protested Friday against Jewish settlement of Palestinian territory in the West Bank city of Hebron, a frequent flashpoint for Arab-Israeli confrontation, witnesses said.

"We will not allow Hebron to become another Kosovo," Mossi Raz, secretary general of the Peace Now group, told the crowd.

"We should guard this place and we must see that such

things do not happen again. What is happening today in Kosovo is a reminder to us of that fact," Husseini said.

The demonstrators, most of them women, were also accompanied by Mohammad Zuhdi Nasashibi, the finance minister in the Palestinian National Authority and, like Husseini, a descendant of a prominent Jewish family.

Israeli police and a large media presence escorted the marchers but there was no violence and no arrests.

The village, the remnants of which have been converted into a psychiatric hospital, was stormed April 10, 1948 by Israeli soldiers.